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ABSTRACT

This course in interpersonal communication and problem solving is designed to be used in workplace education. It is based on responses from employees in businesses participating in workplace education. The course is organized into 11 classes of approximately 2 hours each that cover the following topics: (1) the communication process; (2) the listening process; (3) barriers to communication; (4) assertiveness I, II, and III; (5) communicating with difficult people; (6) group communication; (7) working in teams; (8) problem solving and decision making; and (9) handling conflict. This teacher's guide contains a series of classroom activities, supplemented with examples, handouts, and teacher background, and lists 31 references. (KC)

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Communication for Workers

An Activity-Based Teaching Guide

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Communication for Workers

An Activity-Based Teaching Guide

by

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Course Overview

The Communication Process

- Definitions of communication.
- Kinds of communication.
- Ways we communicate.
- Components of the communication process and the responsibility of each person involved.

(2-3 hrs.)

The Listening Process

- Attributes of a good listener.
- Good listening skills.
- Practice in listening.

(2 hrs.)

Barriers to Communication

- Emotional, physical, and environmental blocks.
- Different perceptions and beliefs.
- Communication roadblocks.
- Overcoming barriers by "I" statements.

(2-2 1/2 hrs.)

Assertiveness

- Types of behaviors: passive, aggressive, and assertive.
- Distinguishing characteristics.
- Ways to stand up for your rights and express your needs, values, concerns, and ideas.
- Preparation of and practice with assertive statements.
- The six-step assertion process.
- Responses to defensive behavior.
- Other kinds of assertive communication.

(4-6 hrs.)

Communicating with Difficult People

- Analysis of a difficult communication situation.
- Changes you would like to make.
- Developing a coping plan.
- Strategies for working with difficult people.

(2 hrs.)

Communicating in Groups

- Difference between one-on-one and group communication.
- Advantages and disadvantages of working in a group.
- Comparing and contrasting a well functioning and a poorly functioning group.
- Types of decision making.
- Making decisions by consensus.
- Task and maintenance roles.

(2-3 hrs.)

Working in Teams

- Differences between groups and teams.
- Characteristics of a team.
- Key elements of teamwork.
- Team development.
- Empowered teams and workplaces.
- Experience in teamwork.

(2-4 hrs.)

Problem Solving and Decision Making

- A process for solving problems.
- Decision making strategies.
- Overcoming decision making blocks.

(4 hrs.)

Handling Conflict

- Definition of conflict.
- Benefits of conflict
- Types of conflict.
- Foundation for conflict resolution.
- Problem solving in conflict situations.
- Implementing a decision.

(4 hrs.)

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Goals and Objectives

1. Define communication.
2. Identify types of communication.
3. Understand and demonstrate the communication process.
4. Demonstrate good listening skills.
5. Identify barriers to communication and demonstrate how to reduce them.
6. Identify and use assertiveness skills.
7. Demonstrate skills for communicating with difficult people.
8. Identify and demonstrate skills for communicating in groups.
9. Demonstrate effective team communication skills.
10. Demonstrate effective problem solving techniques.
11. Use good decision making skills.
12. Explore conflict and develop conflict resolution skills.

Introduction

This course in Interpersonal Communication and Problem Solving began as a result of feedback our workplace education program received from completing a need and demand assessment at one of our participating businesses in Rutland, Vermont in 1993. Communication skills were clearly identified as both an interest and as a need by employees.

To design the course, we asked ourselves:

- What specific skills are necessary for good communication?
- What kinds of communication skills do employees need to use?
  - *listening skills
  - *problem solving skills
  - *group communication skills
  - *team building skills
  - *conflict resolution skills
  - *assertiveness skills
  - *decision making skills
  - *communicating with difficult people

We developed an outline of the proposed communication course and presented it to the employee education committee. They were very helpful, giving constructive feedback and adding new ideas. The interpersonal communication skills we emphasize are those that employees need in the workplace and which they can also use at home and in their communities.

As the workplace education program has added new businesses, the need for communication skills remains critical. Almost every business where we have conducted a need and demand assessment identifies a need for improved interpersonal communication skills.

Today the approach to this course focuses on asking the question: "What communication skills does an effective worker need to meet the demands of a changing workplace?"

To the Teacher

This course is designed to be flexible. Each topic can be given as a separate workshop. If your participants don't have a foundation in interpersonal communication skills, we would suggest that you begin with the first three sessions and use them as a foundation to build on. The sessions appear in a certain order because they build on each other. For example: in the assertiveness sessions, introducing the three-part assertive statement is much easier if the participants have already worked with "I" messages in the previous session.

The course is organized into 11 classes of approximately two hours each. The teacher's guide is organized as a series of classroom activities, supplemented with examples, handouts, and teacher background. Each new activity is indicated by ♦♦. Directions to be given to participants are printed in bold and quoted. If a handout accompanies an activity, the handout is on the following page. For easy reference, all handouts are listed in the table of contents. Some activities are illustrated with boxes which enclose examples, definitions, quotations or sample responses. Background information is provided for the teacher on key concepts in communication, and is labeled as such. To avoid the awkwardness of "he" or "she" we alternate by chapter the gender of the pronoun.

We have found the book People Skills by Robert Bolton to be an invaluable resource, and reference is made to it in the text. In cases where material is drawn from other sources for handouts reference has been made to the original source.

Within a specific workplace we have taken particular communication problems and written them up as role-plays or case studies for that particular workplace. This gives the participants more practical opportunities to work on their workplace communication skills.

Please use this curriculum to meet your needs. You don't have to do each activity in order to make sense of the curriculum. Our hope is that each teacher will adapt the material to fit the needs of her/his participants and teaching style. Some activities have been left indefinite on purpose. In order to give you an opportunity to fill in with anecdotal material taken directly from the workplace. Make use of this curriculum to fit your particular workplace culture.

An optional dimension of this course is the use of Responsive Text (RT) with lessons. Responsive Text consists of computer-based interactive modules which participants can work on alone or in pairs. Accompanying this teacher's guide is a sample of the Responsive Text on disk along with some suggested activities.

During the fall of 1997 Gene Rembisz and Laura Chase co-taught a class in Group Dynamics, for Lake Champlain Manufacturing Technology Certificate Program and had the opportunity to fine tune most of the curriculum. The participants in that class deserve recognition for their enthusiastic participation and input. In addition, Betsy Morgan of the Rutland Regional Medical Center, Education Department, has worked on several projects involving communication skills and has reviewed the curriculum and provided feedback.

Finally, many members of the Vermont Adult Learning staff have contributed to this curriculum. Shirley Birt helped to lay a foundation as a fellow teacher in the program. Pam Letourneau-Fallon shared her knowledge and experience with team building skills; Jean Noland suggested the idea for the box formatting and also created some of the handouts that are used. Alan Tate and Mary Worthington from the Middlebury staff and Jeryl Julian and Ralph Silva from the Brattleboro staff have used the curriculum and given feedback on particular parts. Judith Lashof, Kate Taylor, and Trish Handly have ably assisted with the editing and Judith Lashof supported and guided all of us as director of the program.

I. The Communication Process

♦♦ If the participants do not know each other, choose an icebreaker activity to begin the process of getting to know each other. For example, have them create name tags for themselves using the name of a person they would like to be. Then each person introduces himself and tells why he has chosen that particular person.

♦♦ Take some time to talk about your goals for the class and give participants an opportunity to set goals for themselves. Break participants into small groups to answer two questions. **"What do you want to get out of this course? What expectations do you bring to this course?"**

♦♦ Find one or two cartoons that illustrate poor communication skills and have participants talk about what they see as wrong with the picture. This activity usually generates a lively response.

♦♦ Brainstorm definitions of communication, recording them on a white board or flip chart.

A definition of communication: the process by which we give or exchange thoughts, ideas, opinions, or information through speech, writing or other means.

♦♦ Pose the question: **"What is the purpose of communication?"**

Examples:

- To give or receive information
- To learn how to do something
- To express opinions
- To express feelings
- To solve problems
- To have fun

♦♦ You may choose to have a discussion with participants based on the following background information on the question, **"Why do we communicate?"**

Teacher Background: A human being's ability to use words, signs and symbols to communicate with another human being is that characteristic which sets human beings--*Homo Sapiens* --apart from other living beings. We use communication to reveal our innermost thoughts, ideas and feelings to other humans. This is the purpose of communication. In spite of the tremendous advances we, as human beings, have made in the field of communication, it remains difficult for many people to communicate face to face.

◆◆ Ask participants to imagine what would happen if people did not communicate. **"What would our world look like without our being able to communicate with one another?"** Then ask participants to divide into pairs to share with each other what they have imagined and then report to the whole group.

◆◆ Pose the question: **"What happens in the workplace when communication is ineffective?"** This activity could be handled strictly as a discussion or as a discussion/brainstorm with participant ideas listed on a white board or flip chart. You might also divide participants into small groups to answer this question. In our experience, checking on the participant discussions led to summarizing this question by writing on the board the words "worker," "company" and "customer". The participants then identified which groups were affected as they reported back to the whole class.

Teacher Background: Ineffective communication can cause a gap in all areas of a person's life and in society. Some of the symptoms of breakdowns in communication are loneliness, family problems, job dissatisfaction and incompetence, all kinds of stress, physical illness and in extreme cases, even death. Eighty percent of failures in the workplace result from workers' inability to relate to one another. If 80% of failures in the workplace result from poor communication, then good communication skills are important to job success. We all experience better relationships when there is good communication.

♦♦ Brainstorm: **"How do we communicate?"**

- Verbal
  - auditory
  - face-to-face
  - telephone
  - meetings
  - computers
- Written
  - visual
  - letters/memos
  - reports
  - articles
  - books
- Body
  - facial expressions
  - eyes
  - gestures
  - postures
- Touch
- Smell
- Art/music

♦♦ Ask: **"What kinds of messages did you get from parents, teachers, other adults about communication when you were children?"** This activity could be done in pairs or as a brainstorm.

Some messages were probably negative, such as:
- All conversation is shallow/superficial.
- It is important to build barriers.
- Play games with other people.
- Don't reveal yourself.
- Manipulate others.
- Children should be seen and not heard.
- Sticks and stones can break my bones but little words can't hurt me.
- Don't talk to strangers.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

♦♦ **[Handout]** You may want to put a diagram of "The Communication Process" on a flip chart or white board as you discuss the various components: Sender, Message, Receiver/Listener and Feedback. One way of starting this section is to have participants brainstorm the functions and responsibilities of each component. You can then refer back to the brainstorm list as you discuss each part. The teacher could also create a scenario to illustrate the Communication Process.

Example:

Sender: What are the responsibilities of the sender?
- *Makes sure the message has the same meaning for the receiver that it does for the sender.
- *Creates the message. (Tie in the brainstormed list.)

Message: What makes up the message?
- *Words
  - Need to be precise
  - Be aware of trigger words*
- *Voice-When we are giving a message, what do we need to keep in mind about voice?
  - quality
  - tone
  - speed
  - volume
- *Body language-How does body language relate to the message?
- *Environment
  - noise
  - distractions
- *Kinds of messages
  - objective-those things that you can see, hear, feel, or smell yourself (You may want to give examples appropriate to the setting.)
  - subjective-what is told to you; what you cannot observe through your own senses
- *Order of presentation

Listener-What does the listener do?
- *Hears
- *Sees
- *Interprets
- *Evaluates
- *Responds

Feedback-What is feedback?
- *The response which can be positive, negative or ambiguous

**Trigger words are words that arouse our emotions more than they inform. They are very subjective. Examples:*

right to life	*bureaucrat*
welfare cheat	*queer*
scab	*closed shop*

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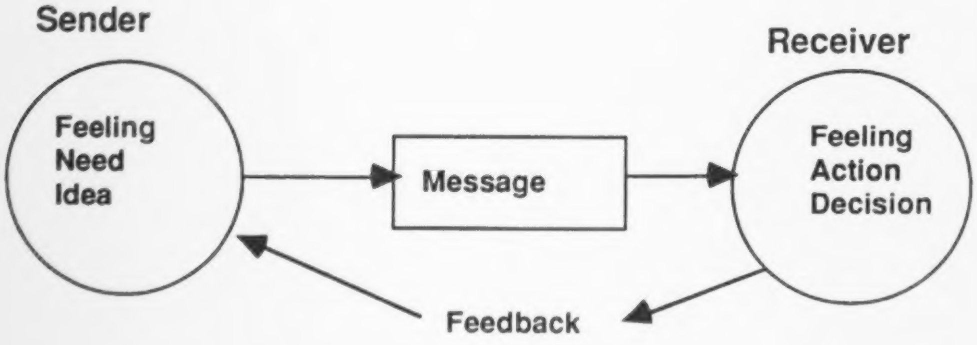
Handout: Diagram of the Communication Process


Sender
Feeling
Need
Idea
Message
Receiver
Feeling
Action
Decision
Feedback

♦♦ Write the words "Hearing" and "Listening" on a white board or flip-chart. Ask participants to define the two words separately. Then relate their definitions to the boxed definitions below. You might want to use contrasting marker colors to set them apart.

> Hearing describes the physiological process by which sound is received by the ears and transmitted to the brain. Hearing is a sensory experience that gathers sound waves indiscriminately. We can hear something without choosing to listen. Hearing is passive. We don't control hearing.

> Listening refers to a more complex procedure which involves interpreting, processing and understanding the sensory experience we call hearing. When we listen our temperature rises and our blood pressure goes up. Listening is active.
> We choose to listen; it is voluntary.

♦♦ **[Handout]** Read the "Rumor Mill" case study together or ask for a volunteer to read it aloud and then discuss the questions.

Handout: The Rumor Mill

Susie and Wayne work in a large manufacturing plant in the paint department. Currently they use large spray guns to coat parts with a no rust paint. As Wayne is working one morning he notices an outsider unloading equipment from large boxes. Wayne panics. He is scared that this new equipment is going to replace all the people on the assembly line. Susie is Wayne's co-worker.

Wayne: "Hey Susie! Did you see that guy unpacking boxes in the middle of the floor? I bet the machines in those boxes are replacement equipment for our machines. Do you think we might be fired?"

Susie: "Gee, Wayne, I haven't seen him, but I'll sure take a look. I thought I got wind of a big lay-off coming up next month."

Wayne and Susie start asking their co-workers about the man unloading the boxes. Within a couple of days word gets around to Bud, the supervisor, that the new paint equipment has come and there is going to be a major lay-off in the department because with the new equipment they won't need the employees any more. Bud is horrified. It turns out that the boxes Wayne saw being unpacked were parts that had been shipped in from another plant for the paint department to paint.

Bud: " Where in the world did my employees get that idea? Don't they know they are supposed to ask me when they have a question?"

1. Could a situation like this happen in your workplace?

2. Make up a response that you would make to your employees if you were the supervisor in this situation.

3. How can you deal with rumors?

II. The Listening Process

◆◆ Discuss the question: **"Why is it important to listen?"**

- Listening takes up more of our time when we are awake than any other activity.
- If every worker in the country made a $10 mistake each year because he failed to listen, it would cost a billion dollars.
- Most workers spend almost half their work time listening; but research studies have shown that listening is only effective about 25% of the time.

◆◆ Brainstorm: **"How do you know when someone is really listening to you?"** Encourage participants to share experiences they have had in which they felt really listened to.

◆◆ Ask: **"From the stories that you shared, what kinds of skills are important to good listening?"**

Possible responses:
*body language
*eye contact
*facial expressions
*listening with only minimal interruptions
*empathy
*encouragement

Teacher Background: There are three major categories of listening skills: attending skills, following skills and reflecting skills. Attending to a conversation is listening with your whole body. Attending is non-verbal communication. It lets the other person know you are paying close attention. Attending skills include body language, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions. Good non-verbal communication shows your interest in the other person. Focusing on attending skills reinforces the basic skills many people already know, and it reminds them what good skills are.

Many people think of communication as a verbal process. Research by students of communication shows that as much as 85 percent of communication is non-verbal. Robert Bolton--People Skills, pg. 39.

◆◆ Ask: **"If, as the listener you are giving the other person your full attention, you want the environment around you to invite the conversation to take place. How would you describe this inviting environment?"**

Possible responses:
- *It is safe.
- *There are no distractions
- *It is quiet.
- *There are no physical barriers

"One of the primary tasks of a listener is to stay out of the other's way so the listener can discover how the speaker views his situation." Robert Bolton--People Skills, p. 40.

Teacher background: "Following" skills are those skills a listener uses to let the speaker know that you are with her. They include:

- Inviting the person to talk.
  Ex. A friend comes to work looking very excited. You ask her "What's going on? Don't you want to share the good news?" You have invited the other person to talk about what's going on with her.
- Encouraging the person to continue.
  Ex. Say more; go on; really?
- Asking questions to clarify.
  Ex. Could you explain what you mean? Is that what you meant?
- Giving the other person time to collect her thoughts by being silent.

Teacher background: Reflective listening is relating back to the speaker what she has said by paraphrasing, reflecting back to the speaker the feelings she is communicating, verifying what the speaker has said, and summarizing the speaker's message.

Examples:

John and Mark work together in the accounting department of a large company.

John: "My figures on the JaZ account are off by $5,000."
Mark: "The JaZ account is off by $5,000?"
John: "I've spent all morning trying to find my error and I keep coming up with the same numbers."
Mark: "I can see that you're frustrated."
John: "Well, I'll spend another half hour on it and then set it aside."
Mark: "That's a good idea. You'll probably see things differently from a fresh perspective."

◆◆ Create case studies and role plays of communication problems that fit the individual workplace. See if participants will volunteer for the role plays or divide them into small groups or dyads and assign a certain problem to each group. Ask them to decide what they would do and then report back to the whole class.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Active Listening. Give the participants about five minutes for each part of the activity. Let them know when to switch. Discuss the debriefing questions as a group.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Listening Case Studies. Gather participants into twos or threes and ask each group to talk for a few minutes and agree on an approach to each situation. Ask each group to state its response.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Who is Listening? Ask for a volunteer to read Bob's part and a volunteer to read Steve's part. Discuss the questions as a group.

Handout: Active Listening

1. Think of an interesting experience from your personal life or job to describe to a partner. (Maybe you've been on a trip, worked in your garden, gone to a movie, etc.) Each one of you will get a chance to be the speaker and to be the listener.

2. One person chooses to be the speaker, and one person chooses to be the listener. While the first person speaks, the listener practices good listening skills.

3. Switch places. The listener becomes the speaker and the speaker becomes the listener. This time the listener does **NOT** use good listening skills.

For Discussion:

1. What was it like to be listened to?

2. What was it like when the listener did not use good listening skills?

Handout: Case Study

1. Your supervisor has asked you to train a new employee. As you are explaining the daily routine, the new employee is carrying on a conversation with a friend who works in another department. You ask the employee to pay attention to what you are saying, but the person only half listens. At the end of your explanation you are not sure what the new employee has heard. What could you do?

2. A friend at work comes to you with a problem. You tell him that you will be glad to talk to him at your break. When it comes time for break, where would you meet your friend and how would you start the conversation?

Handout: Who's Listening?

Situation: Bob is the senior member of the "A" cleaning team for Every Day Cleaning Service. The business is growing fast and Mr. Smith, the owner, has just hired Steve to work on the "A" team. Bob is training him.

Bob: "Steve, let me show you where to find the supplies you will need."

Steve: "This job's going to be a cinch. There's nothing to it."

Bob: "When you are starting with a new client you will need to get a supply cart from the big closet."

Steve: "How much time does a job usually take you? Two hours? Just think, I can clock in for eight hours and only work two. What a life."

Bob: "Next you get this list of basic supplies to put on your cart. You need to make sure that you always have this list of supplies on your cart."

Steve: "Do you think I can finish up by 9:00? My girlfriend gets off work then."

Bob: "Extra lists are kept in this desk. Also you will find your assignment posted in the first drawer."

Steve: "Oh, by the way Bob, where did you say the supplies were?"

For Discussion:

1. Are Bob and Steve listening to each other?

2. What could Bob do to get Steve's attention?

3. Have you ever experienced a situation like this? How did you handle it?

III. Barriers to Communication

◆◆ Brainstorm: **"What kinds of things get in the way of effective communication?"** After you have created your brainstorm ask participants to think of a situation which could illustrate one of the items on the brainstorm list. You can use the situations to help illustrate the different kinds of barriers. Then guide participants in coming up with a definition of communication barriers.

A barrier is something that keeps meaning from happening.

Teacher background:

Kinds of barriers:

***Physical**–You have stayed up half the night with a sick child at home. When you come to work, your supervisor gives you some special instructions for a new job you are to do. As you begin to work, you realize that you can't remember what the supervisor wanted you to do. Because you are fatigued or overtired, you have a difficult time focusing on what the boss told you.

***Emotional**--It is half-way through your shift. There is a howling snowstorm outside; you begin to worry about your drive home and the fact that you have five miles of uphill backroads to climb to get there. That you are worrying about your drive home keeps you from focusing your full attention on your work.

***Psychological**--You have a new supervisor who is very domineering just as your father was when you were growing up. When he starts telling you how to do a procedure you immediately hear your father's voice yelling at you about something he says you have done wrong. Hearing your father's voice blocks the communication with your supervisor.

***Environmental**–It is the beginning of the work day. As a co-worker/supervisor/team leader is trying to brief you on the day's work schedule, all of a sudden a jackhammer starts up right outside the window. You are unable to hear what the speaker has to say.

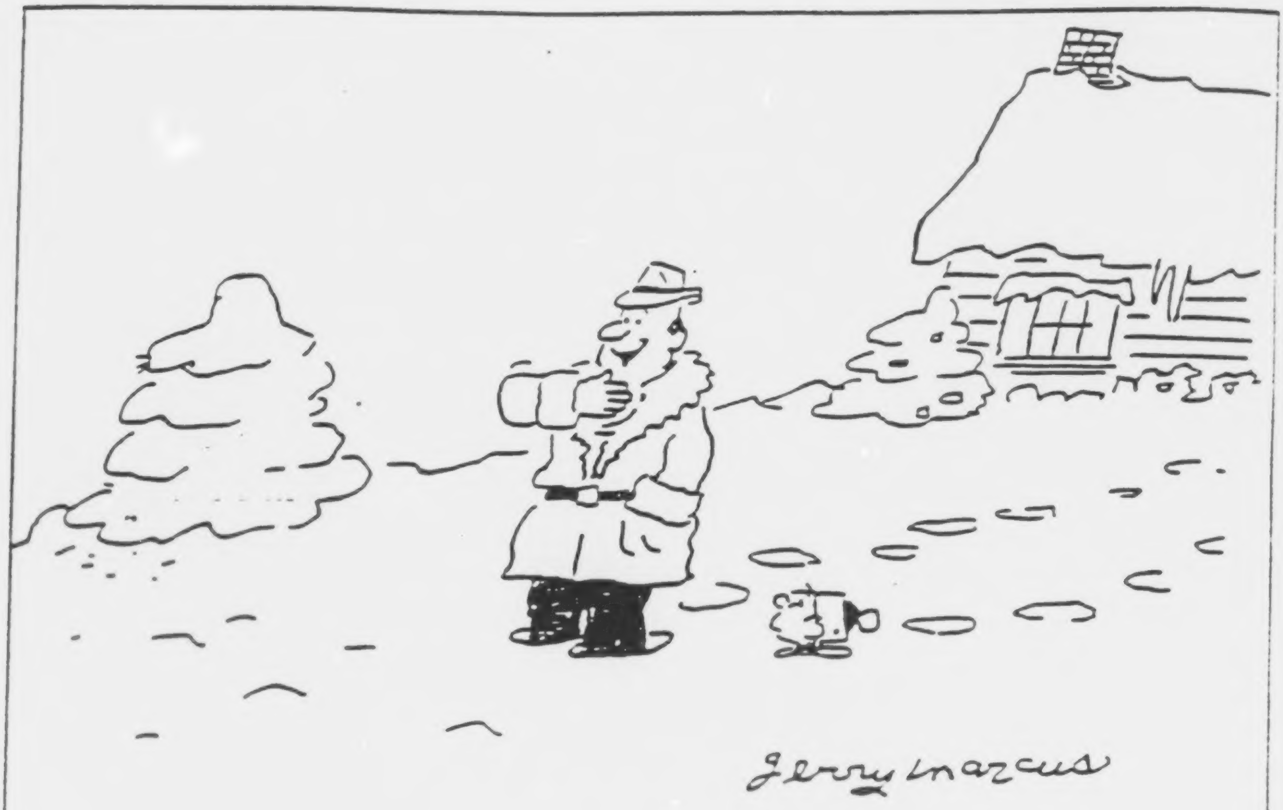
***Technical**--You are in the process of buying a house. You make an appointment with a lawyer to find out what the legal procedures will be. He starts telling you in legal terminology. You are completely lost and haven't learned a thing.

***Bias**--There is a new employee in your area who is Hispanic. When this person appears to get behind in his work you are sure it's because he is Hispanic since you think all Hispanics are lazy.

◆◆ **[Handout]** You might be able to find several cartoons which illustrate how perceptions can become communication barriers. Included is a cartoon from Workplace Communication: Meaningful Messages.

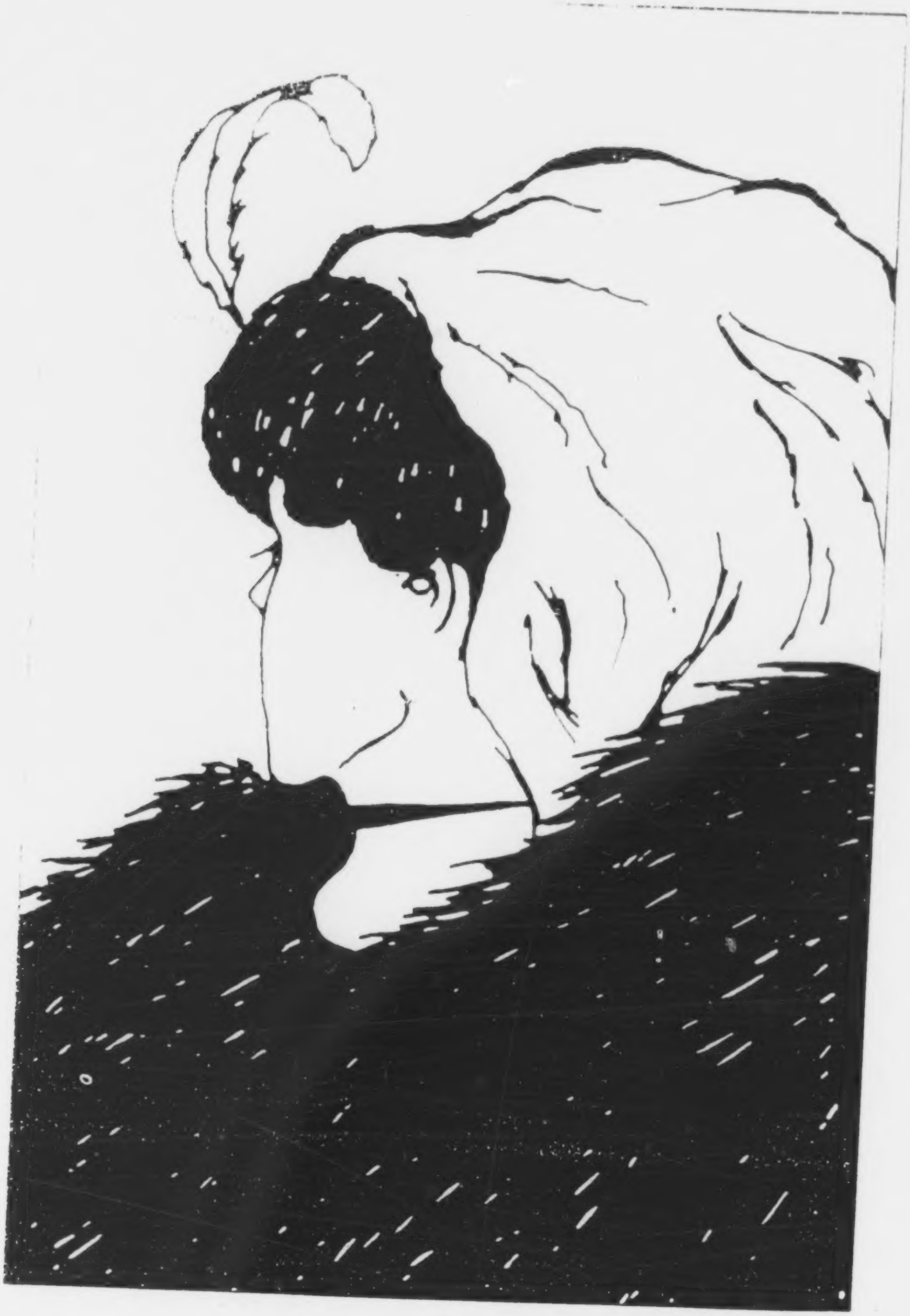
◆◆ **[Handout]** Give participants a chance to look at each picture that follows and write down what they see. Then discuss their perceptions and accept whatever people see.

Handout: Deep Snow



"This is nothing. When I was your age, the snow was so deep it came up to my chin!"

Handout: Perspectives 1



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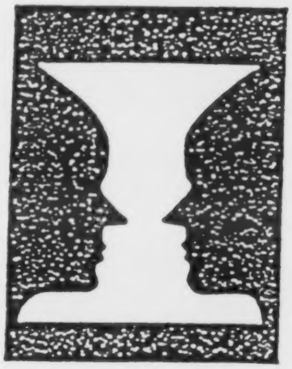
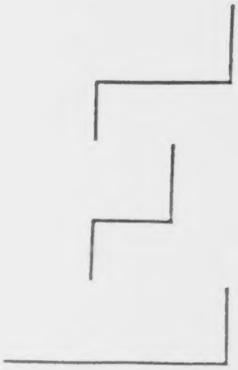
Handout: Perspectives 2

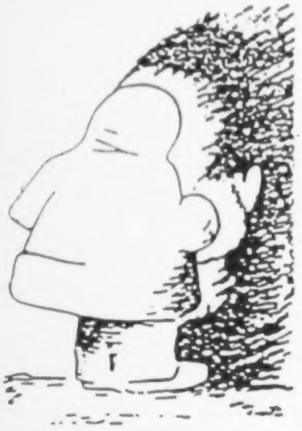


Describe what you see:

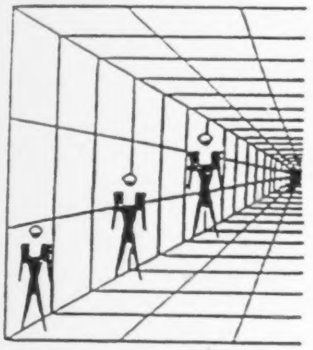


Describe what you see:

Handout: Perspectives 3



Describe what you see:

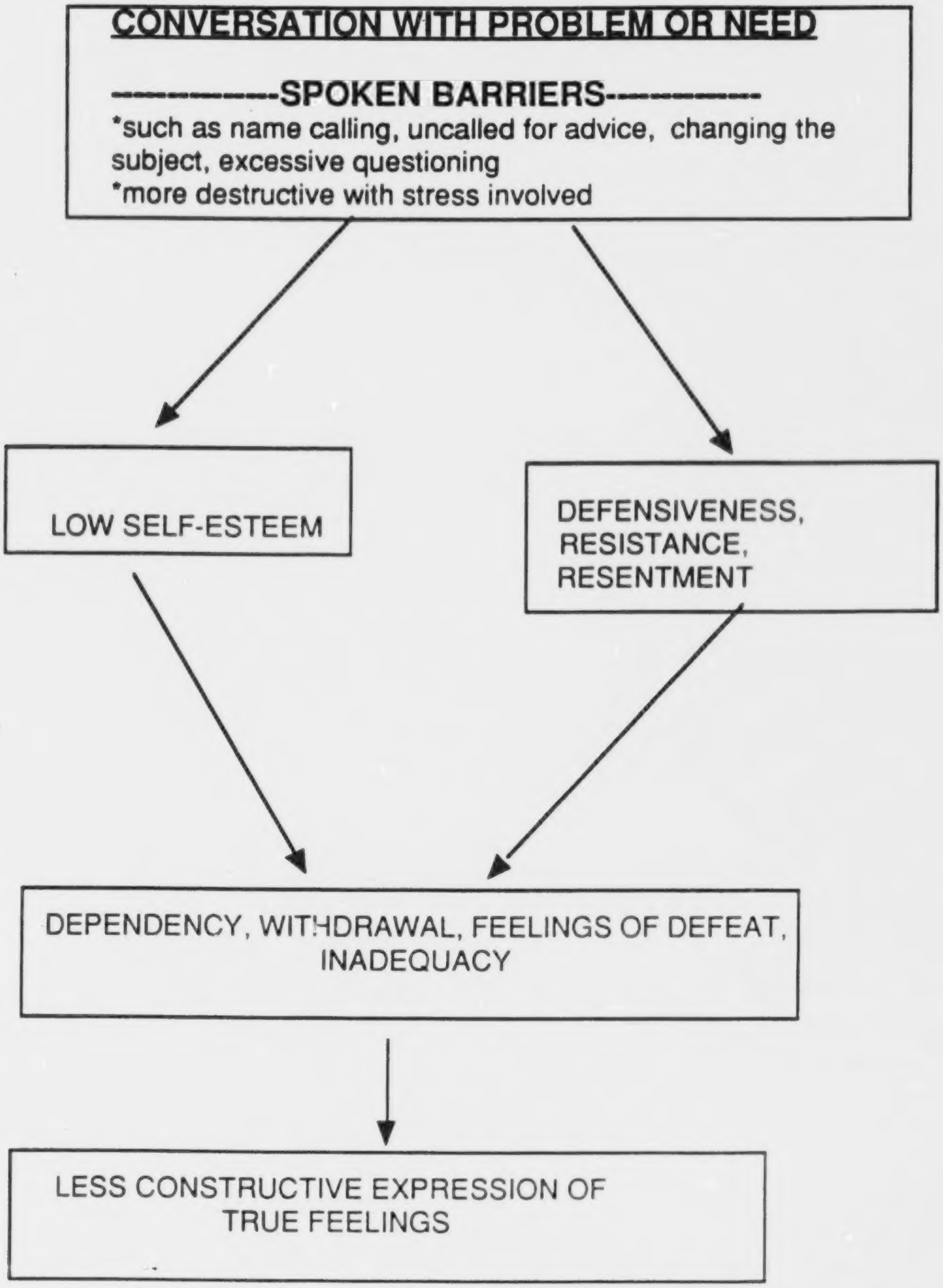


Which figure is tallest?

◆◆ **[Handout]** People typically inject communication roadblocks into their conversation. It has been estimated that these spoken barriers are used over 90% of the time when one or both parties to a conversation have a problem to be dealt with or a need to be fulfilled.

◆◆ There is available, in both People Skills by Robert Bolton and Parent Effectiveness Training by Thomas Gordon, a descriptive list of twelve roadblocks to communication. These roadblocks are very important. In some of the classes and workshops, we have made a copy of these roadblocks as a handout and then gone over them with the participants.

Handout: Impact of Spoken Communication Barriers.



CONVERSATION WITH PROBLEM OR NEED

-------------SPOKEN BARRIERS------------

*such as name calling, uncalled for advice, changing the subject, excessive questioning

*more destructive with stress involved

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

DEFENSIVENESS,
RESISTANCE,
RESENTMENT

DEPENDENCY, WITHDRAWAL, FEELINGS OF DEFEAT,
INADEQUACY

LESS CONSTRUCTIVE EXPRESSION OF
TRUE FEELINGS

Teacher Background: Making "I" statements is a way of overcoming roadblocks and communication barriers. "I" statements take the blame off the other person. The person making the "I" statement takes responsibility for his behavior. "I" statements allow a person to describe the behavior that is bothering him; state how that behavior makes him feel; and then describe the effect the offending behavior has on the person making the "I" statement.

Example:

> **Situation:** When you leave for work the kitchen is all cleaned up. There are no dishes in the sink and the counter has been wiped clean. When you come home you find dirty dishes in the sink and crumbs on the counter.
>
> (describe the offending behavior) When you don't clean up after having a snack
>
> (describe how you feel) I get frustrated
>
> (describe the effect) because it means more work for me.

◆◆ **[Handout]** "I" statements. Go over and demonstrate what "I" statements are and then hand out the worksheet. Have participants choose several of the situations and practice writing "I" messages. Then check in with the participants and have them share what they have written. Be prepared to offer constructive feedback on the messages people have written.

◆◆ **[Handout]** "You" messages vs. "I" messages. This worksheet provides additional practice in writing "I" statements. It is important that participants know how to write "I" messages before you move on to assertiveness.

Handout: "I" Statements

Using this model, create "I" statements to address the situations below.

MODEL:

When you ______________________________
(behavior)

I feel ______________________________
(result of behavior)

because ______________________________
(explanation)

SITUATIONS:

- Your spouse/partner/roommate refuses to share the household chores.

- A neighbor has borrowed a lawnmower and has failed to return it.

- An aunt keeps telling you that you are raising your children wrong.

- You take your car back to a mechanic for the third time--because it still isn't fixed.

Handout: "YOU" Messages vs. "I" Messages

Directions: Read each situation and the "You" message that follows. Change the "You" message to an "I" message.

- **Situation**: An employee keeps interrupting at a meeting you are running which makes it hard for you and other employees to talk.
  "You" statement: "Will you keep quiet for awhile. You are interrupting everybody."
  "I" statement:

- **Situation:** An employee comes to work five to ten minutes late three or four times a week.
  "You" statement: "You mess up my whole schedule when you are late and I can't get my work done on time."
  "I" statement:

- **Situation:** An employee seems to be in a bad mood for several days and sulks and acts sad.
  "You" statement: "What's the matter with you? You're bothering me."
  "I" statement:

- **Situation:** An employee is always leaving the department equipment out of place.
  "You" message: "You never put the equipment away and it takes me three hours just to find what I need."

"I" statement:

- **Situation:** One of the members of your work team always offers good ideas in your team meetings.
  "You" message: "You sure give good ideas in the team meetings."
  "I" statement:

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IV. Assertiveness I

◆◆ Brainstorm and discuss: **"What is assertiveness?"**

Assertiveness is standing up for your rights without violating the rights of others.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Complete the Assertiveness Inventory. The purpose of the inventory is to get participants thinking about their own assertiveness.

Handout: Assertiveness Inventory

Directions: The following questions will be helpful in assessing your assertiveness. Be honest in your responses. All you have to do is draw a circle around the number that best describes you. Key: 0 means no or never; 1 means somewhat or sometimes; 2 means average; 3 means usually or a good deal; and 4 means practically always or entirely.

1. When a person is highly unfair, do you call it to her/his attention?	0	1	2	3	4
2. Do you speak out in protest when someone takes your place in line?	0	1	2	3	4
3. Do you often confront people or situations even if you are afraid of embarrassment?	0	1	2	3	4
4. Do you usually have confidence in your own judgment?	0	1	2	3	4
5. Do you insist that your spouse or roommate take on a fair share of household chores?	0	1	2	3	4
6. Are you able to say "no" to the salesperson who tries to sell you something you don't really want?	0	1	2	3	4
7. When a latecomer is waited on before you are, do you call attention to the situation?	0	1	2	3	4
8. Are you able to speak up in a discussion or debate?	0	1	2	3	4
9. If a person has borrowed money (or a book, clothing, tools , etc.) and is overdue in returning the item, do you mention it?	0	1	2	3	4
10. Do you continue to pursue an argument after the other person has had enough?	0	1	2	3	4

11. Do you generally express what you feel?	0	1	2	3	4
12. If someone keeps kicking or bumping your chair in a movie or lecture, do you ask the person to stop?	0	1	2	3	4
13. Do you think it is important to maintain eye contact?	0	1	2	3	4
14. In a good restaurant, when your meal is improperly prepared or served, do you ask the wait person to correct the situation?	0	1	2	3	4
15. When you discover ordered merchandise is faulty, do you return it for adjustment?	0	1	2	3	4
16. Is it easy for you to mix with people you may not know at parties and dances?	0	1	2	3	4
17. Do you insist that your landlord, mechanic, repair person, etc., make repairs, adjustments, or replacements which are their responsibility?	0	1	2	3	4
18. Are you able to openly express love and affection?	0	1	2	3	4
19. Are you able to ask your friends for small favors or help?	0	1	2	3	4
20. When you differ with a person you respect, are you able to speak up for your own viewpoint?	0	1	2	3	4
21. Are you able to refuse unreasonable requests made by friends?	0	1	2	3	4
22. Is it easy for you to compliment or praise someone else?	0	1	2	3	4

23. If you are disturbed by someone smoking near you, can you ask her to not smoke?	0	1	2	3	4
24. Do you speak in a clear firm voice when you want others to support your point of view?	0	1	2	3	4
25. Do you listen and give other people a chance to have their say?	0	1	2	3	4
26. Do you give others including strangers a chance to speak?	0	1	2	3	4
27. At family meals, does everyone get a chance to talk?	0	1	2	3	4
28. When you meet a stranger, are you the first to introduce yourself and begin a conversation?	0	1	2	3	4

◆◆ Draw the Yin/Yang symbol on the board or flip chart. Explain that assertive communication is a balance between asserting and listening.

Yin/Yang are polar opposites in ancient Chinese thought. Even though they are polar opposites, yin and yang are interdependent and complementary. They are necessary to each other. The ideal is for yin and yang to be in perfect balance. In the field of communication listening and assertiveness are yin and yang. If your goal is to have a healthy relationship, then having a balance of listening and assertiveness is vital to the health of the relationship.

◆◆ Ask participants to think about and discuss how they define their space.

*This boundary is emotional as well as physical. Children, of all ages, as well as adults need their own space--physical and emotional.
ex. Animals create their own space. A dog will go to great lengths to defend his space--his yard--from other dogs.

*Possessions--the things that belong to you, plus an area that extends beyond the body and is surrounded by an invisible border.
ex. A couple walking down the street holding hands has created their own space.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Break the class into three small groups. Give each person the handout which describes all three situations.

For the first situation ask group A to demonstrate a passive response, group B to demonstrate an aggressive response, and group C to demonstrate an assertive response.

For the second situation ask group B to begin with demonstrating a passive response, group C an aggressive response, and group A an assertive response.

For the third situation group C begins by demonstrating a passive response, group A demonstrating an aggressive response, and group C an assertive response.

In this way, each group demonstrates a different response for each situation and every group demonstrates passive, aggressive and assertive responses.

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Handout: Assertiveness Scenarios

Situation #1

Every time your team has a meeting, a particular person from another area calls and interrupts the meeting. You are the team leader.

Situation #2

You and your spouse have full-time jobs. At home you divide the chores among you, your spouse, and your children. Your spouse generally gets home before you do. As you come through the door, your spouse and kids bombard you with questions and news of the day. You need a breather. You don't want to listen to anyone for a few minutes. You need time to center yourself and collect your thoughts.

Situation #3

You are a member of the employee activity committee. One member of the committee always dominates the meetings and will not listen to other people's ideas. After the third or fourth meeting you are really fed up.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Hand out the blank "Assertive Chart". Ask participants to fill out as much of the chart as they can. Then have participants report their answers to the larger group as you write them on the board or flip chart. After they have brainstormed the characteristics, pass out the completed "Assertive Chart" and see how the charts compare.

Handout: Chart of Communication Characteristics

	PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
TONE OF VOICE:			
EYE CONTACT:			
POSTURE:			
GESTURES:			
VERBAL MESSAGE:			
REACTIONS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS:			
HOW OTHERS FEEL:			
HOW THAT PERSON FEELS:			
BELIEF SYSTEM:			
IMPACT ON RIGHTS:			
WHO MAKES CHOICES:			
NEEDS MET:			
GOAL ATTAINMENT:			

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Handout: Chart of Communication Characteristics, Completed

	PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
TONE OF VOICE:	Weak, soft, hesitant.	Loud, harsh, demanding.	Calm and firm. In control.
EYE CONTACT:	Avoids it. Looks away.	Glaring, piercing, eyeball to eyeball.	Relaxed. Eye to eye.
POSTURE:	Slumped, slouched, leans away.	Rigid, leans into others; invades others' space.	Erect, relaxed; Respects others' space.
GESTURES:	Nervous, wrings hands, bites nails.	Forceful, points finger, hands on hips.	Natural to person.
VERBAL MESSAGE:	Indirect, master of the hint..."I sure would like to eat out, but if everyone else wants to stay home, I guess that is OK."	Demanding ..."I don't care what you're doing. We are going out to eat."	Direct, lays cards on the table..."I would like to eat out tonight. Who would like to go with me?"
REACTIONS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS:	Withdraws, uses words like "we" and "they" to avoid responsibility.	Attacks and blames others. Uses "you" statements to avoid taking responsibility.	Faces crisis head on. Uses "I" statements to take responsibility.
HOW OTHERS FEEL:	Sympathy, disgust, frustration, anger.	Humiliated, defensive anger, wants to avoid.	Respect, trust, anger.
HOW THAT PERSON FEELS:	Low self-esteem, unworthy, like a doormat.	Good on the outside, but deep down feels insecure.	Confident, likes self.
BELIEF SYSTEM:	"I'm not OK, but you are."	"I'm OK, but you're not OK."	"I'm OK, you're OK."
IMPACT ON RIGHTS:	Has rights violated; is taken advantage of.	Violates rights; takes advantage of others.	Protects own rights and respects the rights of others.
WHO MAKES CHOICES:	Others make choices for this person.	This person makes choices for self and others.	This person makes choices for self.
NEEDS MET:	Not usually. If she does, it's only a fluke.	Sometimes, but may be sabotaged later.	Usually, but even if she doesn't, she will still feel good about herself because she said how she felt, got her feelings out, and gave it her best shot.
GOAL ATTAINMENT:	Does not achieve goals.	May achieve goals at expense of others.	Achieves goals without hurting others.

◆◆ Discussion: "**Why would a person choose to be passive, aggressive, or assertive? What do you think can eventually happen to people who are passive, aggressive, or assertive?"**

Teacher background: People adopt passive behavior in order to avoid conflict. It can also be familiar because we have been trained by parents and teachers and by society to be passive. Some people unconsciously want to be taken care of. People use passive behavior to manipulate a situation. And finally, people who are passive are often termed "nice."

People who are primarily passive tend to stuff their emotions. If these emotions are not released people may develop serious physical and emotional problems such as--migraine headaches, asthma attacks, skin diseases, ulcers, hypertension, low self-esteem, high anxiety, or depression.

Aggressive people can secure the material needs and objects they desire. They can protect themselves and their space. Aggressive people are controlling and control their lives and can control the lives of others.

The disadvantages of aggressive behavior are that aggressive people may become fearful, anxious about losing control, or alienated from people. Aggressive people may also be candidates for a heart attack.

When people are assertive they like themselves and feel good about themselves. They are able to have more fulfilling relationships. People are more secure and less self-protective.

When you are assertive you are able to live your own life and get more out of it. In the workplace, by being assertive you can get your needs met. You can gain respect and be more productive.

Being assertive also has risks. When you are assertive other people tend to get defensive. Becoming assertive can disrupt relationships that were built on passivity or aggressiveness. There is the possibility that in the work world you can be assertive and be punished for speaking up. Being assertive can be emotionally painful; it can lead to conflict. Because at first being assertive seems artificial, it takes will power to continue practicing assertive communication and behavior.

◆◆ **[Handout] Optional**--If participants are still unclear about the differences between the three types of behavior, hand out three different scenarios for addressing the same situation, and have participants role play and identify each one: passive, aggressive, assertive.

Handout: Which Dialogue Is Assertive?

EXAMPLE ONE:

Sales Clerk: May I help you?

Customer: Oh, um, gee, I don't know...I don't really think so.

Sales Clerk: We have some lovely dresses in the very latest styles...I'm sure we have one that would be perfect for you.

Customer: Oh, well, um, I think maybe I'm just looking right now...

Sales Clerk: No really, there must be SOMETHING here you would like...how about this dress here?

Customer: Oh, um, gee, I really don't know...

Sales Clerk: You simply MUST take it...it was made just for you!

Customer: Oh, I, um, really, well okay...if you insist.

EXAMPLE TWO:

Sales Clerk: May I help you?

Customer: I'm just looking, thank you.

Sales Clerk: We have some lovely new dresses in the very latest styles... I'm sure we have one that would be perfect for you.

Customer: Well, I'll have a look around and if I need your help I'll let you know.

Sales Clerk: No really, there must be SOMETHING here you would like...how about this dress here?

Customer: I really think I'm quite capable of choosing something for myself, thanks anyway.

Sales Clerk: You simply MUST take it...it was made just for you.

Customer: I don't HAVE to do anything. Now I would like to be left alone to have a look around. I will call for you if I require your assistance.

EXAMPLE THREE:

Sales Clerk: May I help you?

Customer: No.

Sales Clerk: We have some lovely new dresses in the very latest styles...I'm sure we have one that would be perfect for you.

Customer: Take a walk lady...I don't need you.

Sales Clerk: No, really, there must be SOMETHING here you would like...how about this dress here?

Customer: No, REALLY, that dress is just about the UGLIEST thing I've ever laid eyes on...next to the rag you're wearing that is...

Sales Clerk: You simply MUST take it...it was made just for you!

Customer: You simply MUST learn to shut your mouth! I'm warning you...back off or I'll shut it for you permanently! *(stomps out of store)*

V. Assertiveness II

"'When people won't let you alone, it's because you haven't learned how to make them do it.'"--David Seabury, psychologist in People Skills by Robert Bolton, pg. 139.

To the teacher: So far in this course you have looked at barriers to communication; you have practiced writing "I" statements, and you have explored the difference between passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior. This section on assertiveness builds directly on these concepts.

♦♦ Have the participants think about a situation in which communication with another person broke down and the participant got frustrated. Have them write a brief description and see if they can identify the roadblocks/barriers that got in the way. If the participants are unable to come up with a situation, make up one or draw from your own experience to illustrate. Later participants will refer back to the situations.

Teacher background: When someone invades/violates our space, our normal instinct is flight or fight. These are very primitive animal instincts. As humans we have a third option--verbal confrontation. Our verbal confrontation can be a hostile attack, a passive complaint or an assertive message. The assertive message is very similar to the "I" message. It has three-parts.

Assertive message:

A non-judgmental description of the behavior to be changed.
A disclosure of your feelings as the person asserting.
A clarification of the effect the other person's behavior has had on you, the person asserting.

Assertive statements are exact. Using assertive messages is a way to defend your personal space without being domineering. When you are assertive, it is more likely that the other person will alter his behavior. As the person asserting there is little likelihood that you will violate the other person's space, or diminish his self-esteem, or escalate defensiveness to destructive levels.

♦♦ Use a white board or flip chart to illustrate a sample assertive message.

Example:

Behavior: Describe the offending behavior, "When you don't shovel the driveway as you agreed to,..."
Feeling: Tell how you feel as a result of the behavior,"...I get very annoyed..."
Effect: State the consequences, "...because I will belate for work."

♦♦ **[Handout]** Three-part assertive messages. Have participants practice writing assertive messages after you have explained the basic process.

Handout: Three-Part Assertive Messages

Write an assertive message for each situation listed below. Be sure to follow the three-part process.

Example:

Scenario: It is 8:15 in the morning. The bus comes in ten minutes. Your eighth grader brings you his dirty gym shorts saying he needs them for class at noon. You have to leave for work by 8:30.

Behavior = When you wait until the last minute to ask me to wash your shorts
Feeling = I get very frustrated
Effect = because I don't have time to wash them.

Situation: When you leave for work your dog is in the fenced in yard. You are the last one to leave home. On your way home you see the dog trotting down the sidewalk three blocks from home. Your two children ages 7 and 10 get home from school an hour before you do. This is the second time you have found the dog wandering in the neighborhood this week.

Situation: Your spouse does not let you know that he/she will not be home for dinner. Two hours after his/her normal arrival time he/she calls you to say that he/she won't be home until nine. You have not fed the kids because you were waiting for your spouse.

"When a person violates your space, the behavior to be changed must be described very accurately and objectively. Many people are surprised to find that the guilty person had no idea that he had invaded your space and stressed you. In order to protect your space you must communicate what the other does that violates your space."–People Skills by Robert Bolton, pg. 144.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Distribute the detailed participant guide which accompanies this section. You will most likely want to demonstrate and discuss the process using all the information in the teacher background that follows.

Teacher Background: Writing Assertive Messages

I. Describe the behavior that bothers you in very specific terms; don't be vague and fuzzy.

If the assertive message does not accurately describe the other person's behavior, it is unlikely that your needs will be met.

Example:

Fuzzy description: "When you don't do your part around the house, I get upset because I have more work to do." (What is the other person's part?)
Specific behavior description: "When you don't put the trash by the curb before going to school, I get annoyed because it means more work for me before I leave for my job."

II. Describe only the behavior.
  A. Don't make inferences about the other person's behavior.
  B. Inferences weaken the assertive message because the person making the assertion can only guess about what is really going on with the other person.

Example:

Situation: I am a committee chairperson speaking to a committee member.
Inference: "When you behaved so rudely at the meeting, I got very embarrassed because nobody else got to talk."
Specific behavior description: "When you talked more than any of the others at the meeting today, I was very frustrated because I wanted to hear what the others had to say."

III. The behavior description needs to be objective.
  A. Avoid attacking or evaluative messages that can contaminate interpersonal confrontations.
  B. Assertive messages avoid character assassination.

Example:

Character assassination: "You dumb, stupid idiot, don't you know you're suppose to turn the machine off."

Specific behavior description: "When you don't turn the machine off at the end of your shift, I get nervous because someone could get hurt."

IV. Assertive messages avoid absolutes.

Example:

Use of absolutes: "When you never return my calls, I get angry because I need an answer."

Specific behavior description: "When you don't return my phone calls, I get frustrated because I need some information from you in order to finish my work."

V. Behavioral descriptions should be as brief as possible.

Example:

Lengthy description: "When you stay late at the office and don't let me know and I don't feed the kids because I'm waiting for you, I get angry because I don't know what to do."

Specific behavior description: "When you stay late at the office and don't let me know, I get frustrated because I don't know how to plan."

VI. Make sure that you are asserting about the real issue to the right person.

A. It is not uncommon for people to displace assertions.

B. Many people find it very difficult to make assertive statements about tough, volatile, important issues.

Example: The wife complains about all the money her husband is spending on cars, when what she is really concerned about is that he is never home to help take care of the children.

C. Be sure to assert to the right person. If you are having trouble at work don't take it out on those at home.

VII Clarify the effect the behavior has on the person making the assertive statement.

A. One of the major reasons assertive statements are effective is that they describe how the other person's behavior affects the person sending the message.

B. Remember:
   1. Be concrete or tangible.
   2. Don't send assertive messages for a third party.
   3. Your assertive message will be effective when there is honest and open communication.

VIII. Part of the skill of sending assertive messages is learning to expect and deal with people's defensive behavior.

A. No matter how well we phrase an assertive message, the other person usually doesn't want to receive it.
B. None of us wants to be told we have violated someone else's space or adversely affected someone else's life.
C. Even the most carefully worded assertive message will tend to trigger a defensive response from the other person.
D. When one person responds defensively the human tendency is for the other person to become defensive too.

The task of the next section is to learn how to prepare assertive messages and how to respond to defensive behavior.

♦♦ **[Handout]** Have participants practice writing assertive messages using the worksheets in the participant packet.

Handout: Writing Assertive Messages

I. Describe the behavior that bothers you very specifically.

Example:

Fuzzy description: "When you don't do your part around the house, I get upset because I have more work to do." (What is the other person's part?)
Specific behavior description: "When you don't put the trash by the curb before going to school, I get annoyed because it means more work for me before I leave for my job."

II. Describe only the behavior. Don't make inferences about the other person's behavior.

Example:

Situation: I am a committee chairperson speaking to a committee member.
Inference: "When you behaved so rudely at the meeting, I got very embarrassed because nobody else got to talk."
Specific behavior description: "When you talked more than any of the others at the meeting today, I was very frustrated because I wanted to hear what the others had to say."

III. The behavior description needs to be objective.

Example:

Character assassination: "You dumb, stupid idiot, don't you know you're supposed to turn the machine off."
Specific behavior description: "When you don't turn the machine off at the end of your shift, I get nervous because someone could get hurt."

IV. Assertive messages avoid absolutes:

Example:

Using absolutes: "When you never return my calls, I get angry because I need an answer."
Specific behavior description: "When you don't return my phone calls, I get frustrated because I need some information from you in order to finish my work."

V. Behavioral descriptions should be as brief as possible.

Example:

Lengthy description: "When you stay late at the office and don't let me know and I don't feed the kids because I'm waiting for you, I get angry because I don't know what to do."

Specific behavior description: "When you stay late at the office and don't let me know, I get frustrated because I don't know how to plan."

VI. Make sure that you are asserting about the real issue to the right person.

1. Sometimes people are afraid to tackle the big issues in a relationship; instead they assert about a series of less threatening ones.

Example:

The wife complains about all the money her husband is spending on cars, when what she is really concerned about is that he is never home to help take care of the children.

2. Don't be afraid to assert about small things, if they are the real issue.

3. Be sure to assert to the right person. If you are having trouble at work don't take it out on those at home.

VII. Clarify the effect the behavior has on the person making the assertive statement.

A. One of the major reasons assertive statements are effective is that they describe how the other person's behavior affects the person sending the message.

B. Remember:

1. Be concrete or tangible.
2. Don't send assertive messages for a third party.
3. Your assertive message will be effective when there is honest and open communication.

Handout: Assertive Worksheet II

Write an assertive message for each situation listed below. Be sure you include a description of the other person's behavior; your feelings; and how his behavior effects you.

Situation: Your teenager uses the family car at least three times a week. Before he was allowed to use the car you very carefully went over the ground rules, which included that he must put gas in the car if he uses it. Three times this week he has brought the car back with the gas tank registering empty.

Situation: You have a friend who calls you with personal problems at work. You have asked him not to call at work just to chat. He has called you twice this week and it is only Tuesday afternoon.

Situation: You are part of a car pool. When the car pool was first set up you all agreed that when the driver was going to be delayed he would call the others in time for them to make alternate plans. Twice this month the driver has failed to call and let the others know that he was going to be late. It is now 5:45 PM, your ride is 45 minutes late and did not call to let you know he was going to be late.

'"...(Whenever) man is called to open himself to the truth, then the power to respond is not something that can be taken for granted... On the contrary, a man finds present in himself a hundred hesitations to respond, to act, and to be in a new way.'"---Gregory Baum as quoted in People Skills by Robert Bolton, pg. 160.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Present the six-step assertive process as described in the handout. **"When you are learning to be assertive use the Six-Step Assertive Process. Over time it becomes more natural to use assertive statements and you can be more spontaneous in your assertive communication."**

Handout: The Six-Step Assertive Process

I. Preparation

- Write the message.
- Test the appropriateness of the message.
- Test your assertive skills in situations where there is the likelihood of getting your needs met.
- Rehearse the message.
- Make an appointment with the other person.
- Choose a neutral setting.

II. Send the assertive message.

- Think about how you will send the message; this affects how the message will be received.
- Don't start with small talk; get right down to business.
- If your message is well received, your body language will help communicate the message.
- Your voice should be strong and clear, not hesitant.

III. Give the other person space--be silent.

- Give your message and be silent.
- The response will most likely be defensive. Be prepared for this.
- Give the other person time to think about what you have said and then to say whatever is on his mind.
- Allow the other person to vent his feelings before he looks at the content of the message.

IV. Reflectively listen to the defensive response.

- This can help diminish defensiveness.
- By listening we may receive new information that may change the need for the assertive message.
- You may receive information about how the other person perceives his relationship with you.
- There are at least five ways that people can respond defensively to an assertive message: by showing hostility, asking questions, sidestepping with debate, crying, or withdrawing.

V. Recycle the process.

- Start the process of asserting all over again.
- It may take three to ten repetitions to get the message across.
- You may need to change your affect with each repetition.
- If you are not being heard, you may need to change the tone of your voice.

VI. Focus on the solution.

- One reason assertive messages work well is that they don't back the other person into a corner.
- The other person does not have to say "yes" or "no" to the solution that you offer.
- The person may offer his own solution.
  - *Before accepting his solution, make sure that it meets your needs.
  - *Let him know if his solution does not meet your needs.
- After turning down a solution, allow some time for silence.
  - *Don't demand or expect the other person to be cheerful about meeting your needs.
  - *All you can ask from an assertion is that the other person's *behavior* be changed.
- Paraphrase the solution back to the other party.
- Thank the other person.
- Set a time when you can check in with each other to see if the solution is working.

Because the other person was defensive, he was probably unable to understand the situation from your point of view. Effective assertion depends on a rhythm of asserting and reflecting. After asserting, most people forget to listen. *Persistence* is key to effective assertion.

Handling Defensive Behavior

◆◆ **[Handout]** Ask participants to identify the five kinds of defensive behavior. Then discuss possible ways to deal with each kind of behavior.

The five kinds of defensive behavior are showing hostility, asking questions, trying to debate, crying, and withdrawing.

Teacher Background

I. Dealing with a hostile response
    A. Recognize
        1. The person's response generally does not deal with the subject.
        2. The person responding will usually pick a subject that inflicts much damage on the person asserting and little damage on themselves.
    B. Use strategies
        1. Use reflective listening to reflect back to the other person what she has said and how she appears to be feeling.
        2. Don't let the other person sidetrack you.
        3. Repeat the assertive message exactly as you said it the first time.
        4. Recycle as many times as you need to.

There is a very good example of a hostile response to an assertive message on page 170 of People Skills by Robert Bolton.

II. Dealing with questions
    A. Don't get sidetracked
    B. Recycle your message as many times as you need to.

Example:

Situation: It has previously been agreed upon that every member of the family will have certain chores to do. It is the daughter's turn to do dishes. Supper was at six o'clock. It is now 8 PM.

Mother: "When you don't do the dishes as you are supposed to, I get frustrated because I can't finish cleaning the kitchen."

Daughter: "Did you have to do dishes when you were growing up?"
Mother: "When you don't do the dishes as you are supposed to, get frustrated because I can't finish cleaning the kitchen."

III. Side stepping debate
  A. Recognize
    1. People who want to debate give the impression that they are very objective and are only trying to clarify the message.
    2. In reality, they are trying to avoid the assertive message and get the person asserting engaged in an unrelated debate which will always be a win-lose situation.
  B. Use strategies
    1. Stand firm.
    2. Reassert your message.

IV. Coping with tears
  A. Recognize
    1. Some people respond to an assertive message by bursting into tears.
    2. This can be another method of avoidance and manipulation.
  B. Use strategies
    1. When a person responds by crying, acknowledge his feeling.
    2. Reassert your message.

V. Overcoming withdrawal
  A. Recognize
    1. Some people respond by withdrawing into silence.
  B. Use strategies
    1. Give the person space.
    2. Let her be silent.
    3. Reflect back to her what her body language is saying.
    4. Reassert your message.

Handout: Five Kinds of Defensive Behavior

1. **Handling hostile responses**
   - Instead of listening to the assertive message many people look for a counterblow at the time the message is given.
   - Reflect back to the other person what he said and how he was feeling.
   - Don't get sidetracked.
   - Repeat your message.
   - Recycle as necessary.
2. **Dealing with questions**
   - Don't get sidetracked.
   - Repeat your message.
   - Recycle.
3. **Sidestepping debate**
   - People who want to debate give the impression that they are very objective and only want clarification.
   - All this does is avoid taking action.
   - Don't get sidetracked.
   - Repeat your message.
   - Recycle.
4. **Coping with tears**
   - Acknowledge the person's sadness.
   - Repeat your message.
   - Recycle.
5. **Overcoming withdrawal**
   - Some people respond by withdrawing.
   - Give the person space to be silent.
   - Reflect back to him what his body language is saying.
   - Repeat your message.
   - Recycle.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Give the participants an opportunity to create their own assertive messages. Divide them into dyads and have them practice giving the messages to each other. Be prepared to critique what the participants have written.

Handout: Assertive Messages

Practice writing assertive messages. Be sure to include the other person's behavior, your feelings, and how his behavior affects you.

VI. Assertiveness III

To the teacher: Sessions IV and V have laid the foundation for assertive communication. This session (Session VI) focuses on other kinds of assertive behavior. You may choose to use all the examples and activities or you can be selective.

◆◆ Have participants think of a situation that actually happened to them in which they might have used assertive skills and write it down. Everyone puts his or her situation in a box. Mix them up and then have everyone draw a piece of paper. On a separate sheet of paper have them write down how they handled the situation. The task is to have people take turns creating a possible solution using assertive skills. Then the person who wrote the situation can compare the suggested solution with how she actually handled the incident.

" 'The assertive education process can be compared with learning a foreign language. At first you master the words, phrases, ground rules. Suddenly, you can communicate with a child's vocabulary. You continue to learn until you acquire fluency. With the mastery of your new skill, you feel the freedom to be more creative in what has become your second tongue.' "
—Jean Baer, psychiatrist, and Herbert Fensterhelm, writer, quoted in People Skills by Robert Bolton, pg. 177.

◆◆ Ask: **"Can you think of ways that we are naturally assertive without thinking about how to form an assertive message?"**

Natural assertions are non-aggressive ways of getting one's needs met without following any particular method. Many natural assertions we use without thinking. We use them when neither party is under much stress.

Examples:

"Since we are having company next weekend, I'd appreciate it if you could check the back bathroom when you clean."

"I need the time sheets by Wednesday noon so I can make my report to payroll."

◆◆ Ask: **"How do you show appreciation for another person?"**

Teacher background: The truly assertive person is freely able to express her appreciation for another person.

How to express appreciation:

- *Let another person know that you value her specific behavior by using one or more elements of the three-part assertive message.
- *Describe what it is that the other person has done that deserves recognition/appreciation.
- *Tell the other person how you feel about or value her behavior.
- *Let the other person know if she has had a positive affect on your life.
- *After giving the appreciation, be silent so that the other person can take in and appreciate what you have said.
- *Don't use flattery.

> Flattery--saying something complimentary you really don't mean.

*Don't use praise to manipulate another person.

> Example: "You're such a good boy, I know you'll mow the lawn for me tonight."

◆◆ Divide participants into dyads. Have them practice giving appreciation to each other. As the teacher/facilitator you may want to demonstrate giving appreciation.

◆◆ Ask: **"What are natural and logical consequences? How do you think they could be useful?"**

Teacher background: Natural and logical consequences can be used instead of a system of reward and punishment.

Natural consequences are based on the normal flow of events. They allow the other person to suffer the consequences of his behavior. Natural consequences represent the pressure of reality without any specific action being taken on your part. They are usually effective.

Example of natural consequences:

A boy gets a red wagon for his birthday. He is very carefully told that he must put the wagon away before he comes in the house for the night. He is also told that if he doesn't put his wagon away it may get stolen and he won't get another one. He leaves the wagon outside; it gets stolen and he begs for another one. His parents do not buy him another wagon.

Logical consequences are arranged or applied. They must be experienced as logical in nature and not as arbitrary. Logical consequences cannot be applied when there is a power struggle because in that circumstance they typically deteriorate into or are seen as acts of retaliation. They can backfire.

Examples of Logical Consequences:

Several students arrive late for class. The teacher starts the class on time and does not go back over the material they have missed.

A client arrives late for an appointment and is only given the time remaining in the scheduled appointment.

Guidelines for consequences:

*Ask yourself what would happen if you didn't interfere. Look for natural consequences and allow them to happen.

*When appropriate, use this formula: "When you (describe the behavior), then (state the consequences), you will have another chance (statement of when this can occur)."

*Detach yourself emotionally from the issue.

*The consequences must be put into operation consistently and with everybody.

*The goal of consequences, changed behavior, may take a long time to accomplish.

◆◆ Direct participants to: "**Think of a situation where you might use natural or logical consequences and then describe it and create the dialogue that would take place.**"

Learning to Say "NO!"

Teacher background:
Most of us are surrounded by people who want to make demands on our time. Learning to say "no" can help us have more control over our lives and can help us set limits on the demand for our time.

Ways to say "no":

*Natural "no": Many people develop their own ways to turn down invitations and state refusals.

*Listen reflectively and then say "no".

Example:
"You really want me to crew for you in the sailing races this weekend. I'd love to do it, but I've made a prior commitment and won't be able to."

*The reasoned "no": The person says "no" and gives a brief explanation. Be sure that the reason is sincere and not an excuse.

*The rain check "no": You say no to a particular request but let the other person know you are still interested.

*The broken record: Use a one sentence refusal that you repeat no matter what the other person says.

Don't allow yourself to get side-tracked by responding to any other issue. Say "no" in a soft, calm, unemotional voice. Allow plenty of silence. Be persistent. This is particularly useful when the other person won't accept "no" for an answer.

Saying "no" is one of the most effective ways to clearly and seriously indicate the boundaries of your own space. When you say no with strong resolve, the other person will almost always honor your space.

◆◆ Ask: **"Where and how do you say 'no'? Think of situations where you have said no or would like to say no. Write down the situation and share it with another participant."**

VII. Communicating with Difficult People

Teacher information: This section is about communication difficulties that people have with other people in the workplace, at home, or in other social settings. It is not about bad people vs. good people. The intent is not to blame anyone. The intent is to help participants recognize that people communicate differently; that people have different styles of communicating; and that people have different ways of looking at the world.

Teacher suggestion: Because people look at and approach the world differently, we believe it is important to point out to participants that there are a number of tools (personality inventories) available to help focus on those differences. It is logical to us that this unit would be an ideal place to make use of one of these inventories. Probably the most scholarly and well respected personality style inventory is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The Myers-Briggs requires a trained test administrator and everyone in the group would be expected to take the test. Another inventory which borrows from the Myers-Briggs is Personal Style Inventory developed by Dr. R. Craig Hogan and Dr. David W. Champagne. It is available from Organization Design and Development, Inc., who also produce the Learning Styles Questionnaire by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford. The book Communicating At Work by T. Alessandra and Phil Hunsaker includes a chapter,"Communicating with the Four Styles," which discusses different styles of communicating. Other possible resources are included in the bibliography.

◆◆ Start out this section with a series of questions. These can be handled by brainstorms, general discussions or participants writing down their answers to the questions and then sharing with the class.

1. **How many of you have to deal with difficult people?**
2. **What is a difficult person?**

Definition: People who don't do what you want them to do and do what you don't want them to do.

3. **What happens when you encounter a difficult person? How do you feel? What thoughts do you have ? What action do you take? How do you react?**
4. **What would you like to have happen when you encounter a difficult person?**
5. **What options do you think are available?**

Possible answers to what you would like to have happen:

- *reduce the abuse
- *go after what is really important
- *know how to deal with the situation
- *assert yourself with tact
- *feel better about yourself
- *stay in control of your feelings and actions
- *protect your self-esteem
- *stay calm
- *have the other person see your point of view

Available options:

- *Stay and do nothing
- *Accept the person as she is and go on
- *Change your attitude and behavior
- *Leave

"If all you know is what you don't want, you get more of it." Rick Brinkman and Rick Kirschner. "How to Deal with Difficult People." Career Track Video

◆◆ Ask participants to write a description of a difficult person that they have to deal with. These descriptions can either be signed or handed in anonymously. Then pick a description to analyze using the following questions.

-Is the person always like this?
-Is something going on that gives you a clue to the behavior?
-What do you see? hear?
-What assumptions are you making about the situation?
-What behavior are you using?
-What is this person like, and how can I relate to her/him?

◆◆ Brainstorm: "**What communication skills do you have that you could use to communicate with difficult people?**" The teacher should make a list that can be referred to.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Use the following directions to guide participants in writing their coping plan on the chart provided.

1. **Describe in as much detail as possible the behavior of the person you find to be difficult.**
2. **Write down briefly your understanding of that behavior.**

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3. Think now of your own past behavior as you have interacted with the difficult person. Describe it in as much detail as you can. Are there times and/or situations when the interaction seems better? Worse?
4. Now think of the coping behaviors that would most likely be useful with the difficult person you have described. Consider that some behavior represents a mixture of defensive reactions. What have you tried that seemed to work? What has not worked?
5. As you review what you have written down under item 3, what do you see in yourself that requires acknowledgment and attention to enable you to best carry out the most promising coping behavior?
6. Which coping skills do you need to practice?
7. Action plan: What will you do, by what date?

Handout: Difficult People Coping Plan

Insert Difficult People Coping Plan printed sideways.

DIFFICULT PEOPLE COPING PLAN

Describe in detail the behavior of the person you find difficult.	Describe your under-standing of that behavior	Describe your behavior as you interacted with the difficult person	List coping behaviors that would be useful in working with your difficult person	What changes do you need to make in yourself to cope with your difficult person	Which coping skills do you need to practice?	Create an action plan

Teacher background:

Strategies for Working with Difficult People

1. Keep some emotional distance.
   *Don't take annoying behavior personally. Difficult people are not deliberately trying to hurt you. They are trying to protect themselves.
   Example: Maybe you know someone who hogs all the praise. This may be because the person's sense of self is so fragile that he is incapable of sharing with another person.

2. Make sure that your expectations are realistic. Ask yourself:
   *Can you change someone else? Thinking that you can change another person is magical thinking.
   *You can only change yourself.
   *Do you need to re-evaluate your relationship?

3. Give the person some of what he needs: You don't have to completely give in to the other person's needs: be practical.
   Example: "If a co-worker acts paranoid and seems to suspect you of trying to sabotage him, keep your plans out in the open in order to reassure him that you're not hiding anything." (Hales, 1995)

4. Watch out for "all or nothing" thinking.
   *There are people who see things in all-or-nothing, black-or-white, or right-or-wrong terms.
   *These people expect you to support them 100% or they think of you as a traitor.
   *This kind of person is unable to see others as complex beings with a variety of character traits.
   *Remember that the problem lies with them.

5. Don't attack.
   *If you ever have to confront a difficult person, simply state how you feel or what you observe without judging.
   *This is a good place to use "I" statements or assertive messages.

6. Hang in there.
   *Difficult people, especially the noisy ones who call attention to themselves, will most likely quiet down after awhile.

7. Don't take the rap.

*When difficult people act/behave badly, they typically blame someone else for "making" them do it.
*Ultimately there is no justification for obnoxious, inconsiderate, annoying behavior.
*Be sure you respect your rights as a person and expect others to do the same.
*This is a good place to use assertive thinking and behavior.

8. If all else fails, write the person off.
   *Don't maintain the relationship just for the relationship's sake. This is not taking your own needs and rights into consideration.
   *It is not worth it to you.
   *Your life and health are more important than the relationship.

Teacher note: Included in the bibliography are a number of resources that can provide more opportunity for discussion and suggested strategies.

VIII. Group Communication

◆◆ Ask each participant to make a list of the groups she belongs to, then choose one group and describe in writing how this group works, answering the following questions:

1. **Are there requirements for membership?**
2. **Is the group dependent on another body?**
3. **Why did you join the group?**
4. **How is group leadership determined?**
5. **What are the rules of the group?**
6. **How successful is the group?**

◆◆ Ask: **"What are some differences between one-on-one communication and group communication?"**

◆◆ Ask: **"What are the advantages of groups?"**

*People working together in groups are more likely to have more information available to them than individuals working alone.
*Groups can use large quantities of information more efficiently than individuals.
*Working in groups can be a positive experience, building self-esteem for some individuals

◆◆ Ask: **"What are the disadvantages of groups?"**

*Group members bring their own agendas to the group.
*In a large group there is less efficiency on the part of the individual.
*The members of a highly cohesive group may seek consensus without exploring alternatives.
*There is a tendency of groups to be either more conservative or more risky than their individual members.
*There is a tendency by group members to evaluate ideas on the merits of who the speaker is and not on the merits of the idea itself.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Divide the participants into groups. Each participant should have a blank sheet titled "Characteristics of a Well-Functioning Group". Ask participants to take a few minutes to refer back to the group each has described and make a list of the characteristics of a well-functioning group. Then ask the groups to compare their individual lists and make a master list. Give the groups fifteen to twenty minutes to complete these tasks. Then bring the participants back together in the larger group. Make a list of characteristics of well-functioning groups which the whole class agrees to by picking one characteristic from each group until all the characteristics have been listed.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Characteristics of a Poorly Functioning Group. Repeat the above procedures to make a class-created list of Characteristics of a Poorly Functioning Group.

Characteristics of a Well Functioning Group

*Sets goals.
*Has leader who gets things done.
*Uses problem-solving techniques.
*Respects thoughts/opinions of all members.
*Stays focused.
*Has good organizational skills.
*Uses written rules/protocols.
*Uses effective listening skills.
*Communicates clearly within the group.
*Has good attendance.
*Has positive attitude/outlook/energy/enthusiasm.
*Uses integrated model.
*Has honesty and trust among membership.
*Practices flexibility and a willingness to change.

From the Group Dynamics Class, Lake Champlain Manufacturing Technology, Burlington VT, October 1997

Handout: Characteristics Of A Well Functioning Group

Characteristics of a Poorly Functioning Group

*Lacks a common goal.
*Has a bad attitude.
*Lacks respect among membership.
*Is confused.
*Has negative outlook.
*Lacks organization.
*Has poor leadership.
*Is not focused.
*Has lack of interest.
*Is conflicted.
*Practices poor communication skills.
*Has poor attendance.
*Is easily distracted from task at hand.
*Practices poor listening skills.
*Has too much stress/tension.
*Uses segregated model.
*Demonstrates lack of trust/concern for one another.
*Is inflexible.

From the Group Dynamics Class, Lake Champlain Manufacturing Technology, Burlington VT, October 1997

Handout: Characteristics Of A Poorly Functioning Group

◆◆ **[Handout]:** "Tips for Facilitating Groups". This handout is worth reviewing to see what discussion may be generated. You could also use the handout as the starting point for an exercise on running a group or do this in conjunction with the group simulations.

◆◆ **[Handout]** "Group Simulations". There are three different situations. You can select one for all groups to do or you can assign different situations to each group.

Handout: Tips for Facilitating Groups

- Know the purpose of the group. Why does the group exist?
- Be prepared for the group. Review the purpose; have some idea of the direction you want to move in.
- Support your opinions. Don't let the group members walk all over you; you are entitled to your ideas and opinions also.
- Be open to other points of view. Hear others out.
- Don't compete with the group.
- Listen to everyone.
- Don't put anyone on the defensive. Assume that everyone's ideas have value.
- Control dominating people without alienating them. Set ground rules.
- Keep all participants informed about what is expected of them.
- Give others a chance to run the meeting. Rotate the leadership.
- Encourage everybody to participate.
- Keep group on task.

Handout: Group Simulations

Situation: You have been appointed members of a committee to make a proposal to management on renovating the employee lounge. You have had one meeting with management which has given you some basic factual information. Management has proposed that the work be finished in six months. The budget for this project is $25,000. In addition, the committee will have available to them an interior designer to answer questions. This is the second meeting of the committee. At this meeting you will need to name a facilitator; decide if you want to assign other specific jobs; determine what tasks need to be accomplished; and begin drawing up a time line.

Situation: The employees at "The Zee Company" are threatening to go out on strike because management has announced that part of the new employee contract includes employees paying one-half the cost of health insurance. Up until this time the company has provided health insurance as part of the benefits package. Each of you has been named by your work group to be part of an employee committee to try and work with management to avoid a strike. Your committee wants to have at least two proposals ready to present to management. The committee needs to select a facilitator and probably a note taker. Then you need to draft your proposals.

Situation: Your committee has been asked to design a conference for all company employees on the topic "Learning to Play at Work." The committee has met once and come up with the title. This is the second meeting. Your main task is to come up with a list of speakers, activities and workshops for the conference. You also need to think about cost. Will you charge fees? Is the company underwriting the conference? Where are you going to meet? When will the conference be held?

◆◆ Ask participants to think about the group that they described at the beginning of this lesson. **"How does that group make decisions? Does it use more than one way? "**

◆◆ **[Handout]** Ask: **"What are the different ways that a group can make decisions? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method?"**

Handout: Group Decision Making Methods

Type of Decision	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Arbitrary decision	Useful for simple routine decisions; use when there is not time for input from others or when no one else is around.	One person makes the decision; no input from other members; may cause resentment among the group.
2. Command decision	It is like an order. You don't question it.	It is usually made by one person, those in authority or the person with the most power. People can be resistant to command decisions.
3. Expert member	Useful when one member of the group has a particular expertise/knowledge; don't use when members would not be motivated to implement.	Who is the expert? Commitment from other group members depends on the extent of respect for the expert. Can lead to sabotage if the expert is mistrusted. There may not be agreement as to who is the expert.
4. Average of members' opinions	Useful when it is difficult to get the group members together for discussion; when commitment of other members is unnecessary. Can be used for compromise or with simple routine decisions.	Not enough interaction among group members to generate commitment to implement the decision; can sidestep controversy and conflict which can be damaging to the group in the future.
5. Authority makes decision after discussion	Makes more use of group resources than preceding methods; may result in a more informed decision. The authority is accountable for the decision. Commitment to carry out the decision depends on the extent of trust in the authority's judgment.	Does not resolve controversy or conflict among group members; may create a situation where group members are vying for the leader's attention or members may say what they think the leader wants to hear.

6. Consultative decision	Gather other people's ideas and opinions. Then make the decision.	While others have a voice, one person is still making the decision.
7. Majority control	Most common and familiar. Is perceived as democratic. Allows for minority opinion. Best used when complete group commitment is not needed. Can be as simple as calling for a vote when a decision needs to be made; or as complicated as following Robert's Rules of Order for parliamentary procedure.	May leave an alienated minority which could damage the group's future effectiveness. There may not be full commitment to the decision.
8. Minority control	Can be used when all group members cannot meet to make a decision or when the group chooses to delegate and delegate decision making to a sub group of members.	Does not allow for the use of the full resources of group members. May lead to less than full commitment by all group members.
9. Consensus	Creates an innovative high quality decision in which all members are committed. Everyone is involved in the decision making process. Best used when making serious long term decisions to which all members need to be committed. Also used informally for non-controversial decisions.	Can be very time consuming. Cannot be used for quick decisions. Can fail unless there is a commitment to resolve conflicts. Requires an investment of time and training to learn the process.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Divide the participants into groups, or participants can stay in the groups previously created. Give each group the three handouts: "Building Consensus," "Consensus Flow Chart," and "Consensus Problem Solve." Allow the groups enough time to really work through the problem and come to consensus, a minimum of a half-hour. You may want to call the groups together as one large group after they have finished the activity to ask the groups to compare their solutions and, using consensus, come up with a single solution.

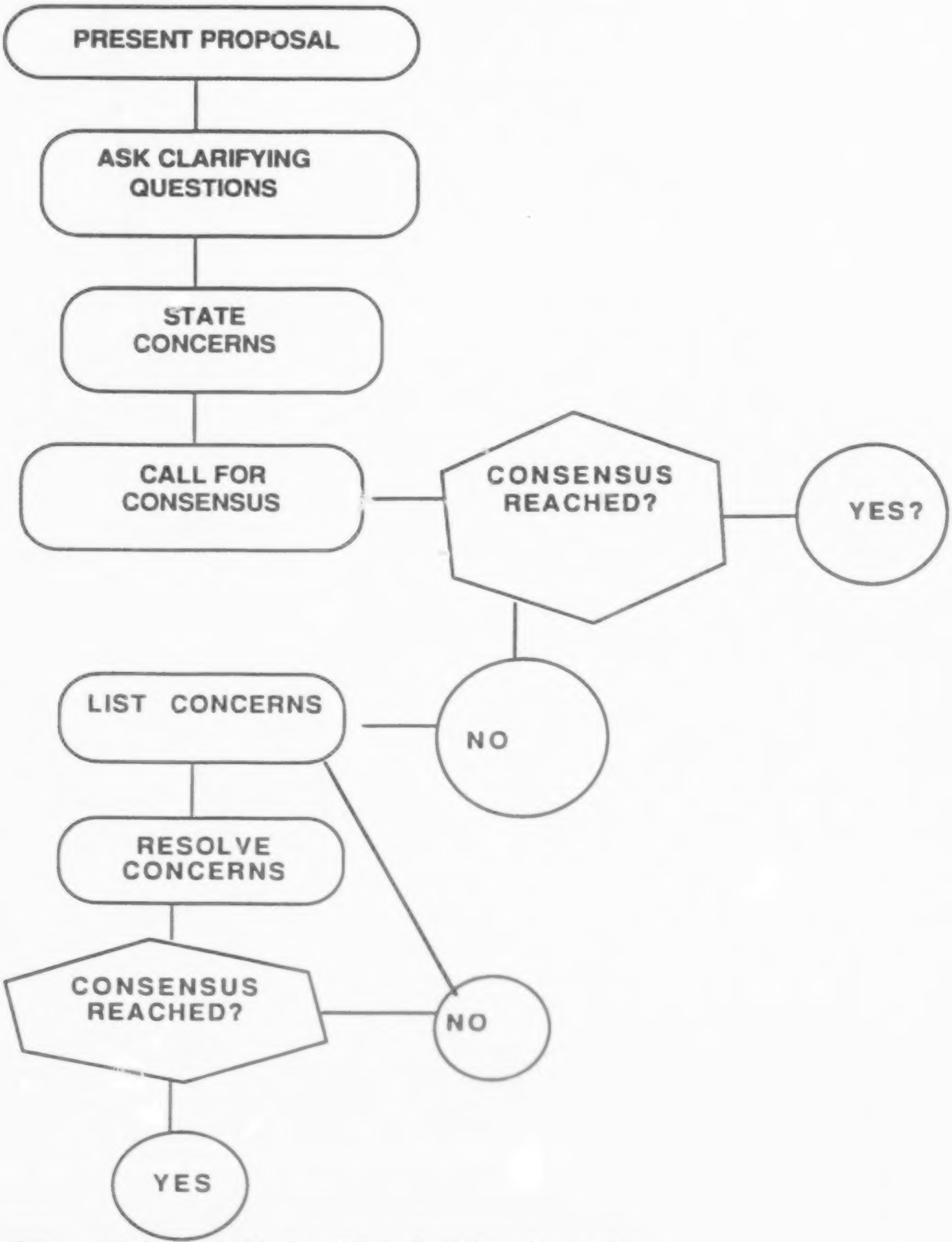
Handout: Building Consensus

Consensus is a method for making group decisions. It is also a concept that is used by work teams. Using consensus to make decisions involves the whole group. Everyone in the group is given an opportunity to speak to the proposal before someone can speak a second time. Agreement on the proposal is reached only after everyone in the group can agree to the proposal. This does not mean that the proposal cannot be changed. Part of the process of working toward consensus is getting all the issues out on the table prior to making the decision and working as a group to resolve concerns and differences. Coming to consensus does not mean that everyone has to be in total agreement. What it means is that those with differences can accept the proposal in its evolved form.

It is not unusual for groups working by consensus to have some symbol--- a stick, rock, feather, whatever you choose---to signal to everyone whose turn it is to speak.

Handout: Consensus Flow Chart

MAKING A DECISION BY CONSENSUS
A FLOW CHART


PRESENT PROPOSAL
ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS
STATE CONCERNS
CALL FOR CONSENSUS
CONSENSUS REACHED?
YES?
NO
LIST CONCERNS
RESOLVE CONCERNS
CONSENSUS REACHED?
NO
YES

These steps can be repeated until a decision is made.

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Handout: Consensus Problem Solve

The supervisor in your area has decided that each work group will set up their own schedule for going to lunch. The company's busiest times are between 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM. It is necessary that there be adequate phone coverage at all times. As a group you need to work out the lunch schedule using the consensus method.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Every member of a group takes on at least one "Task Role" and one "Maintenance Role". Ask each participant to think about which roles she took on in the group simulations. Do the roles she takes on in a group relate to any other roles that she has in her life (i. e. family, social, etc.).

Handout: Task Roles

1. **Initiator-** Starts a discussion, opens a new topic or introduces a new issue. Helps to get the group moving and to get the group unstuck.

2. **Information Seeker-** Asks others in the group to share or clarify information. Tries to get others to share as much information as they have.

3. **Information Giver-** Shares information with the group. Offers facts, opinions and relevant experiences. Volunteers what she knows to help the group.

4. **Challenger-** Questions the team's thinking to generate higher quality results. May play devil's advocate. Asks "what if" questions. Thinks critically about input and urges group to consider different points of view.

5. **Coordinator-** Helps the group clarify ideas and suggestions. Makes connections which can advance the problem solving process.

6. **Evaluator-** Offers comments about the team's work and compares it to standards for the purpose of producing best possible results.

7. **Completer-** Reminds others about unfinished business and the need for follow up.

8. **Summarizer-** Summarizes what has been decided or accomplished in the meeting.

9. **Secretary-** Takes notes and/or records ideas, decisions, or process of the group meeting.

10. **Time-Keeper-** Monitors progress of group in terms of amount of time available and informs group of time remaining to complete tasks at the meeting.

11. **Task-Refocuser-** Points out to the group when the discussion has gone off task and tries to refocus the group to the task.

12. **Procedure Developer-** Develops procedures or methods for accomplishing the task.

Handout: Maintenance Roles:

1. **Harmonizer-** Attempts to mediate between individuals or sub-groups to reduce conflict. Recognizes the need to keep communication open. Tries to reduce pressure and promote group spirit and harmony.

2. **Gatekeeper-** Is conscious of all the group members and encourages everybody to participate.

3. **Encourager-** Supports others to speak, take, or defend a position. Reinforces efforts of others and creates a supportive work climate for the group.

4. **Compromiser-** Proposes compromise or mediated solutions to conflicts. Recognizes that prolonged disagreement can be destructive to the group discussion. Helps the group look for compromise strategies.

5. **Standard Setter-** Asserts or enforces group norms for behavior or quality of decisions. Offers evaluation of group functioning as a way of raising the standards for the group's process.

6. **Tension Reliever-** Uses humor to defuse or relieve tension resulting from stress or conflict.

7. **Feeling Expressor-** Identifies or expresses feelings that characterize a common group experience.

8. **Energizer-** Senses changes in the group's energy level. Urges the group to focus its efforts.

9. **Processor-** Offers interpretations of how the group is working. Looks behind the surface activity and interprets what the team really may be thinking or feeling. May help a team work through its feelings.

IX. Working in Teams

◆◆ Ask participants to gather according to whether they were born in odd or even years. Odd on one side of room; even on the other side of the room. (You have just organized people into groups.) Ask them to line up according to birth year without talking. Then check to see how they did.

Next organize participants into clusters of three to five people with a specific task to do. Each cluster picks one person to draw. The other people will tell the designated drawer what to include in the picture. The task is to recreate the masthead of the local newspaper from memory. (You have just created a team.) After you have finished ask the participants to identify which experience was a group and which was a team. Then ask them to define each.

Group--a number of people placed together.
Team--a number of people working or acting together.

◆◆ Ask: **"You have just been working as a team to draw the newspaper masthead. Based on that experience and what you already know, what are the characteristics of a team?"**

*Must have a common focus.
*Members must be interdependent. They need to share each other's experience, ability, and commitment in order to reach their mutual goal.
*Members must believe that working together as a group is more effective than working in isolation.
*The team must be accountable as a unit within the larger organizational structure.
  ~Team members need to know the members of their team.
  ~Team members need to know the channels of communication within the team.

◆◆ Ask: **"We have looked at the characteristics of a team. Now we will be considering the key elements necessary for team work. What do you think these elements might be?"**

Handout: Key Elements of Teamwork

I. Commitment

*Team members see themselves as belonging to a team rather than as individuals who operate autonomously.

*The team members are committed to the team goals above and beyond their personal goals.

II. Trust

*Team members have faith in each other to honor their commitments, maintain confidences, support each other, and act reasonably within accepted norms.

III. Purpose

*The team understands how it fits into the overall business of the organization.

*Team members know their roles, feel a sense of ownership, and can see how they make a difference.

IV. Communication

*Effective communication among members, between members and outside the team.

*Members handle conflict, decision making, and day-to-day interactions smoothly.

V. Involvement

*Everyone has a role in the team.

*Despite differences, team members must feel a sense of partnership with each other.

*Contributions are respected and solicited, and a real consensus is established before committing the team to action.

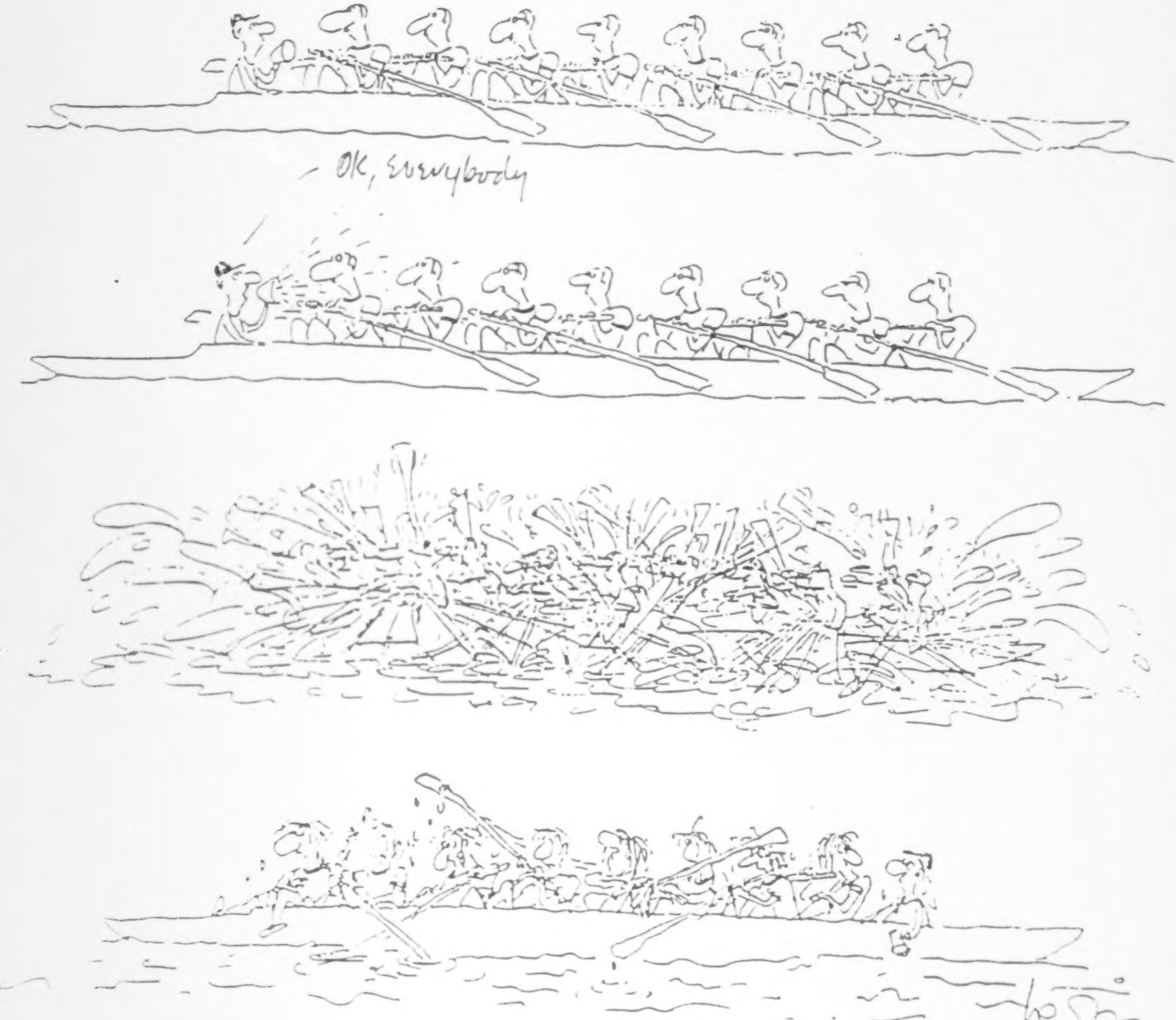
VI. Process

*Effective means to accomplish the goals including: problem-solving tools, planning techniques, regular meetings, meeting agendas and minutes, and a protocol for dealing with problems.

◆◆ **[Handout]** The cartoon shows a dysfunctional team. Ask the class what steps need to be taken to create a team that is working together.

Handout: Cartoon of Dysfunctional Team

Insert cartoon of dysfunctional team.



◆◆ Ask: **[Handout] "You have been told that the whole company is going to be organized into work teams. What questions do you think would be important to think about as these teams develop?"** Participants may want to jot down their thoughts. Then distribute and discuss the team development questions.

Handout: Team Development Questions

I. Climate
  - *What is the work environment?
  - *How does it feel to work within the team?

II. Involvement
  - *Is everyone pulling his/her weight?
  - *Is there equal involvement?

III. Leadership
  - *Is it necessary for the team leadership to be supervisory?
  - *Is it necessary to have a supervisor as a member of the team?
  - *How is the formal team leadership determined?
  - *Who else shares in leadership functions?

IV. Problem solving
  - *Who on the team needs problem solving skills?
  - *What problem solving tools work well for the team?

V. Decision making
  - *Which decision making method would work?
  - *Is the focus on the group objective--the end result?
  - *Does the team concentrate on what is happening now, not on past mistakes?

VI. Communication
  - *As you develop stronger communication skills, how does your role change?
  - *As the team develops stronger communication skills, how do the team dynamics change?

VII. Conflict
  - *Does the team work with conflict rather than trying to avoid it?
  - *Does conflict provide energy or drain it?
  - *Is conflict tapped as a source of creativity?

◆◆ Discussion: **"What is empowerment?"**

Empowerment in the workplace is power sharing. For employees this means taking responsibility not only for their own jobs but also for helping the whole organization work better. Employees become active problem solvers and help plan who will do things and how they will be done. Teams are empowered to work together to improve their performance and their productivity on an ongoing basis. The organization is structured so that employees can achieve agreed upon results and do what needs to be done and not just what is required of them by management. The organization recognizes and rewards employees and teams for their accomplishments.

◆◆ Ask participants to pick a partner and think aloud (taking turns listening to each other). Direct them to describe to their partners what an empowered workplace would look like. Then call on participants asking each one to share one idea. Go around the room as many times as needed for all ideas to be shared.

Characteristics of an Empowered Workplace

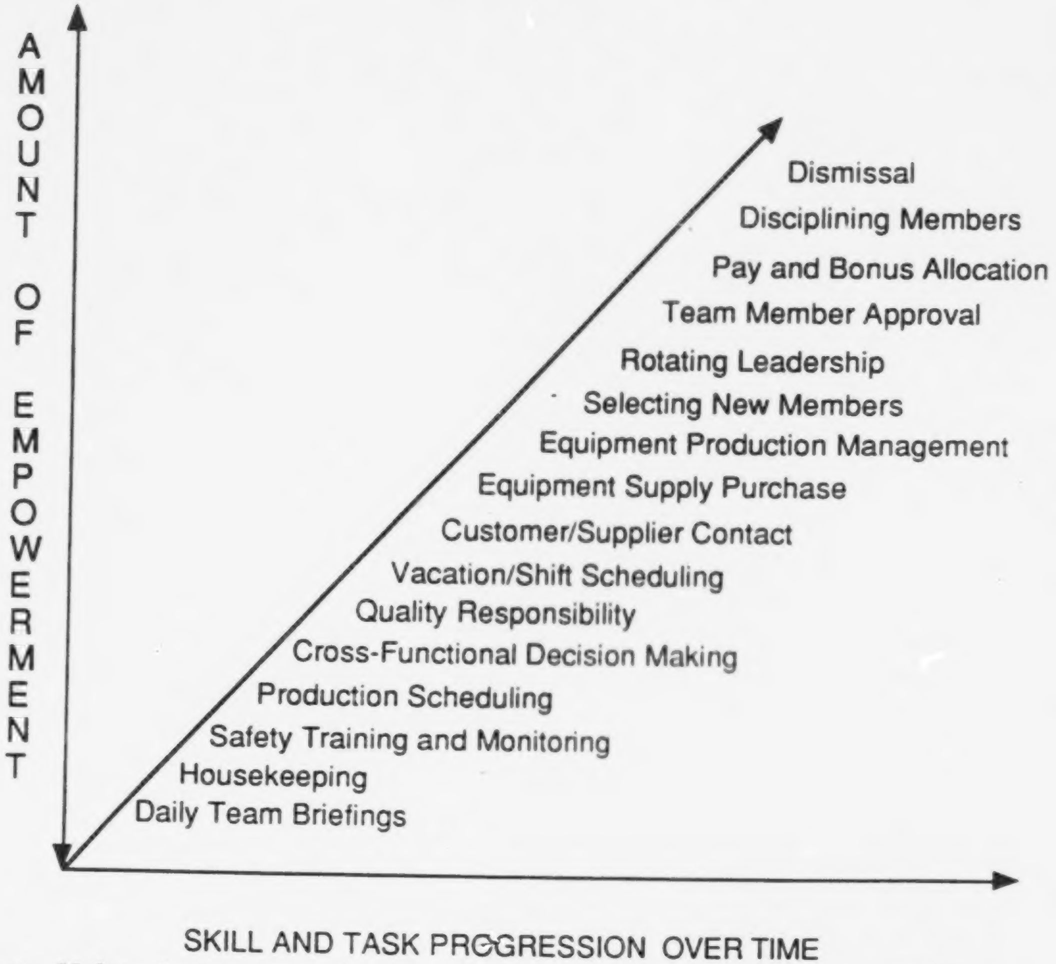
- Each job is expanded to include a greater variety of skills and tasks.
- Creativity and innovation are encouraged.
- Employees have more control of work related decisions.
- The team is involved in the whole work process, not just one part.
- Customer satisfaction is a goal.
- The team is oriented to the marketplace.
- Employees take greater pride in their work .
- Employees feel a sense of ownership.
- Work teams take initiative in developing new ideas.
- Employees become decision makers.
- The workplace becomes a continuous learning environment.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Ask participants to gather in their teams again. (You will probably want to use the team grouping for the rest of the activities.) Distribute the "Empowerment Continuum" graph. Ask participants to study the graph for a few minutes and then discuss within their team how many of the duties/tasks they think a work team could perform. Encourage participants to take risks and think about what could be, not just what they know. Have the teams report back to the whole class the results of their discussion.

Handout: Empowerment Graph

Directions: Look at the following graph. If you are/were on a work team how many of the functions do you think your team should/could be responsible for?

EMPOWERMENT CONTINUUM



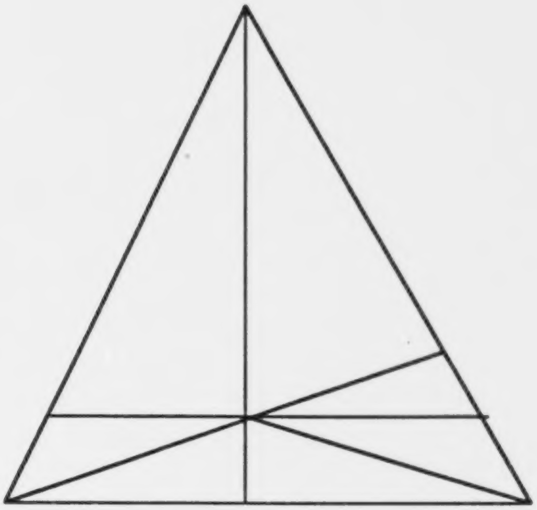
Source: Holpp, Lawerence, "Applied Empowerment." Training, Feb. 1994 p.40

◆◆ **[Handout]** Each team is to figure out how many triangles there are in the diagram. Have participants reflect on their process and functioning as a team, particularly the questions on climate, involvement, leadership and problem solving. You may want to observe the teams and share your observations too.

Answer: There are sixteen triangles.

Handout: Triangle Exercise

How Many Triangles Do You See?



◆◆ **[Handout]** Make one copy of the cooperation puzzle. Cut the copy so that each clue is on a separate slip of paper. Divide the clues among the team members. Direct the team to figure out what question is being asked, and then using the clues determine what the answer is.

Additional Team Building Resources:

There are any number of resources, activities, and games that can be used to build work teams. A few we have used are:

1. Team oriented wilderness simulations provide experience in reaching agreement. One source is "Surviving in the Arctic," p. 73 in Communication Skills That Work: A Functional Approach for Life and Work, Book 2. (Contemporary Books, Chicago, 1991).

2. The book Creative Training Tools by Bob Pike with Julie Tilka (Lakewood Publications, Minneapolis, 1994) has over a hundred ideas for team building and participation.

3. The book Workplace Dynamics : Sixteen Role Plays and Simulations for Workplace Education, by McVey & Associates, Inc. (New Readers Press, Syracuse, 1992) provides simulations for team problem solving.

Handout: Cooperation Puzzle

Bobby feels bad about walking out on the argument with Caryl and has decided to call to apologize and to settle the argument once and for all.

Robin is new in town and knows only one person, the next door neighbor, Shelly. Robin will go if Shelly goes.

After being given a free ticket to the concert, Shawn has decided to go.

Caryl had an argument with Bobby and Bobby stomped off without working it out. Now Caryl won't go to the concert if Bobby goes unless Bobby apologizes and resolves the argument.

The concert is on Saturday night.

Gene, Sandy and Dale have pooled all their money but it's still not enough for three tickets.

D.J. wants Lou to be able to go to the concert, since it's Lou's favorite group. He will help out by explaining the genetics unit. Also, Lou knows the lead singer and might be able to introduce D.J.

Micky's parents have set a 10:00 p.m. deadline for weekdays and an 11:00 p.m. deadline for weekends. They mean what they say.

Chris can drive.

Red doesn't like rock and roll and never did, but does like Lou and will go if Lou goes.

Tracey will be going to the concert as long as Shawn doesn't need a babysitter. Tracey's regular job is to babysit, so that comes first.

Val will go if the group is under ten people. Val doesn't like big groups - thinks they get into too much trouble.

The concert is scheduled for 9:30 - 12:30.

Jan will go to the concert if someone drives them - it's a parental rule.

Gene, Sandy and Dale are good friends; they've agreed never to go to a concert if they can't go together.

Who will be going to the concert?

Lou got a bad mark in the last Biology quiz and has to study every night for an upcoming test, unless someone can help him understand genetics.

Shelly just bought a pile of records and doesn't have any money left for concert tickets.

X. Problem Solving and Decision Making

◆◆ As a warm up, pose this puzzle: **"Think of the number pad of a touch tone phone. There are four rows with three keys in each row. Now imagine what letters of the alphabet go with each key. Which letters of the alphabet are not included?"**

Answer: Q and Z

◆◆ **[Handout]** The Bank Account Problem is another warm-up puzzle. The answer to this is the 59th day.

Handout: The Bank Account Problem

A new bank is offering a special account which doubles your money every twenty-four hours. On the day the account is opened you deposit $1. It takes 60 days for you to reach the amount you want to have in your account. On what day is your account half full?

◆◆ Ask each participant to think about a problem that she/he is having. Hand out copies of the "Problem Solving Steps" to the participants. Then ask for a volunteer who would be willing to share his/her problem with the whole group and use that problem to illustrate the problem solving steps.

Problem Solving Steps

I. Identify and select your problem.
    A. What do you want to change?
    B. Discuss the problem, not the solution.
II. Determine your goal.
    A. What are your needs?
    B. What do you want to have happen?
III. Evaluate your options.
    A. Brainstorm possibilities
    B. Ask why?
    C. Ask why not?
    D. Ask what if?
IV. Decide on a solution.
V. Develop a plan of action.
    A. What actions will be taken?
    B. When will the actions be completed?
    C. How will they be done?
    D. Who will do them?
    E. What resources will be needed?
    F. What forces will support the plan?--work against it?
    G. How will I know if the plan is successful?
VI. Implement the plan.
VII. Evaluate the results.
VIII. Adjust the plan.
    A. Have the goals changed?
    B. Have the circumstances changed?

◆◆ Ask: **"How will you prevent future problems?"**

*Take time to plan.
*Communicate.
*Think ahead.

Handout: Problem Solving Steps

I. Identify and select your problem.

II. Determine your goal.

III. Evaluate your options.

IV. Decide on a solution.

V. Develop a plan of action.

VI. Implement the plan.

VII. Evaluate the results.

VIII. Adjust the plan.

Decision Making Skills

Note to the teacher: In a previous session we examined the process of group decision making. In this section we will look at the process of how we make decisions individually.

◆◆ Ask participants to take a few minutes to think about how they usually make decisions. Instruct participants to write down their thoughts since they will be referring back to them later. Questions to ask:

Do you always have a hard time making a decision?
Are there certain kinds of decisions harder to make than others?
Do you have any strategies that you use to help you make decisions?

◆◆ Ask: **"What method do you use most often to make decisions?"**

Possibilities: intuition; analyzing the details; impulse

◆◆ **[Handout]** Distribute the Dream Job Decision. Ask participants to individually make the decision and respond to the process questions, then discuss their responses in small groups. Each group can compile a list of helpful strategies and share that with the class.

Handout: Dream Job Decision

You have just been offered your dream job with a promotion and salary increase over your current job. This job is located in North Dakota in a village of 200 people, three hours from the nearest hospital and town of any size. The high school is a one hour commute each way and the elementary school is 20 miles away.

What would you do and why?

What was your thought process in making this decision?

Did anything hold you back from making a decision?

What strategies did you use to help you make a decision?

◆◆ Comment on the decision making strategies reported by the small groups, highlighting or adding the following strategies.

*Set a goal--identify what it is you want to decide.

*Consult with others--get their expertise.

When you consult with someone, you don't ask them to tell you what to do. You ask them to tell you what they do and why. After you consult with someone else, you will find some of the information just won't apply. Use the information that does apply to make your decision.

*Use the process of elimination--

Example:

There is a special event coming up and you want to look good. You could:

1) Buy a new outfit
2) Look for something new at the secondhand store.
3) Borrow something from a friend.
4) Add a new accessory to an old outfit.

Which is going to be the best option for you? Prioritize your options. List each option and put a 1, 2, 3, or 4 beside each one. The one with the lowest number beside it is the one you would choose.

*Anticipate the consequences--You have to make a decision that has several equally attractive outcomes. You can only choose one. Imagine yourself in each situation anticipating the outcome. Make your decision only after you have imagined yourself in each situation.

*Weigh the Pros and Cons: For each possibility, list the pros and cons. Now look at what you have written down. Which possibility has the most pros? That is probably the one to choose. Exceptions would arise if the cons were materially significant and would prevent you from implementing that decision.

*Combine options-- maybe two options combined make more sense than any one option alone.

◆◆ **[Handout]:** "Weigh the Pros and Cons:" For each possibility list the pros in the "Pros" column and the cons in "Cons" column. Be sure to stress that the pros and cons of each option should be listed independently.

Handout: Weigh The Pros And Cons

You are planning a vacation in February. Your travel agent has given you four different vacation packages. Your job is to weigh the pros and cons and decide which one you would choose. Operate under the premise that the price quoted is an all inclusive package.

Package 1: You can go to Disney World for four nights for $2,000.
Package 2: You can go to Las Vegas for three nights for $1,575.
Package 3: You can go to Tahiti for two weeks for $5,000.
Package 4: You can go to Aruba for ten days for $2,250.

Directions: List the pros and cons for each vacation package and then see which one comes out on top.

Disney World

PROS	CONS

Las Vegas

PROS	CONS

Tahiti

PROS	CONS

Aruba

PROS	CONS

Top choice: ______________________________

____

◆◆ Explain the concepts of proactive and reactive and ask participants to decide which kind of decision makers they are.

Decisions can be either proactive or reactive.

*Proactive--taking charge of your life, taking action in a situation before there is a problem.

*Reactive--you wait for the problem to happen before you take action.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Ask individuals to share decision making blocks. Identify their blocks according to the handout and discuss how to overcome them.

Handout: How to Overcome Decision Making Blocks

Analysis paralysis--Occurs when people gather a lot of information, ask a lot of questions, read articles on the subject and finally reach the point where they are not getting any new information, and they are still unable to make a decision. These people make a decision by not making a decision.

To overcome: Set a deadline for yourself to make that decision.

Perfectionism--Occurs when people have a hard time admitting that they can make a mistake. Perfectionists would rather make no decision than make a wrong decision. By putting off making a decision because they are not sure it is right, perfectionists become procrastinators.

To overcome: Look for a wise decision, not a right decision; be flexible; What is the worst thing that could happen? How likely is it that the worst will happen? What could happen if the worst did happen? Could I live with the worst if it did happen?

Fear of making a decision--Occurs when people are afraid of of taking risks. The fear may be: a fear of being wrong; a fear of experiencing the unknown; fear of making a change. Do you scare yourself with "what ifs"? There are many unknowns in decision making.

To overcome: Practice. The more you practice the better you will become at making decisions. Be intentional in making decisions. Every day take a little risk; expect to feel afraid and make a decision anyway. When you take a risk, reward yourself. Give yourself a positive reinforcement. If the decision is large break it down into smaller pieces if you can. Finally, it's OK to say you are afraid.

Fear of taking action--Sometimes we don't make a decision because it means that we have to take action.

To overcome: You may just have to get out there and do it. When you make a decision, you make a commitment to do something. Once you make a decision you have new-found power and control over your life.

XI. Handling Conflict

"To be human is to experience conflict."--Robert Bolton, People Skills.

◆◆ Free association: **"What comes to mind when you hear the word, 'conflict?' "**

◆◆ Brainstorm: **"What are the benefits of conflict?"**

Conflict can be risky. But, some of our best growth--personal, professional and organizational--comes as the result of conflict. A certain amount of conflict helps us reach a deeper level of intimacy. Love and conflict are necessary for a healthy relationship.

Teacher background: There are two types of conflict, rational conflict and irrational conflict. Within each type, there are two aspects of conflict: the emotional aspect and the substantive aspect. The emotions of conflict are anger, resentment, distrust, fear, defensiveness, rejection. In the process of resolving conflict it is important to deal with the emotions first. The substantive aspects of conflict involve conflicting needs, disagreements over policy and practice, different concepts of roles and uses of resources. Once the emotions are dealt with, then the more rational problem solving, involving the substantive aspects, can be addressed. The techniques we will be talking about apply primarily to rational conflict.

Rational conflict	**Irrational conflict**
*Is based on the reality of opposing:	*Comes from:
needs	ignorance
goals	error
means	historical tradition and prejudice
values	hostility
interests	the need for tension relief
	*Creates unwarranted tension between people
	*Can cause a lot of unnecessary destruction
*Can be resolved	*Needs to be prevented or controlled

This view of conflict is adapted from People Skills by Robert Bolton.

◆◆ Brainstorm: **"Think about all the communication skills you have learned. Which of these skills may be helpful in resolving conflict?"**

listening skills, assertive skills, reflective listening, remembering not to use roadblocks, having a support system

◆◆ **[Handout]** What are some ways people respond to conflict?

◆◆ **[Handout]** The recommendations in the Foundation for Conflict Resolution handout are always helpful when working through conflict.

Handout: Responses to Conflict

*Denial--The persons involved pretend to themselves and everybody around them that everything is all right. This occurs when the parties are so threatened that they deny there is a conflict. Repeated denial can eventually cause physical and emotional illness.

*Avoidance--The persons involved in the conflict may be aware of the conflict, but they do everything in their power to avoid facing the conflict. In a relationship this may result in premature forgiveness in which one party forgives the other without acknowledging and working through the anger and hurt feelings. Repeated avoidance can lead to a diminished relationship and isolation.

*Resignation--One person gives in to the other's needs instead of facing the conflict. Repeated resignation is bound to create resentment.

Denial, avoidance, and resignation are all passive behaviors.

*Controlling power--One person imposes a solution on another. Repeated controlling power can cause drastic results such as: sabotage, stealing, work stoppage, emotional distancing. When one person's needs are imposed on someone else, there is very little motivation to carry out the other's plan. Controlling power can create alienation.

> **Example:** When a parent's solution is repeatedly imposed on the child without the child's input, there will be resentment and alienation--and probably rebellion--on the child's part.

Controlling power is an aggressive behavior.

*Compromise--The parties to the conflict reach consent by mutual concessions. In a world of conflicting needs, wants, and values, compromise is a great improvement over other methods of conflict resolution, but the repeated use of compromise kills creativity, stifles people, and strangles profits.

*Collaborative problem solving--This is the most creative way to handle conflict resolution. The two sides recognize that they have conflicting needs. They join together to find a solution that is acceptable to both. No one loses. No one gives up or gives in. Both parties benefit.

In all of the examples above except collaborative problem solving, one or both parties to the conflict do not fully get their needs met. One or both parties must give up something. Someone loses. In collaborative problem solving both parties get their needs met.

Handout: Foundation for Conflict Resolution

Setting the Stage

I. Find a quiet, peaceful and calm place that is mutually agreeable to all sides.

II. Set a time acceptable to both parties, and be sure to allow enough time.

III. Explain the ground rules to the other party and ask the party to join you.

Ground Rules

I. Treat the other person with respect.
    *Be aware of each other's rights.
    *Keep in mind that both sides are seeking to tell the truth as they see it.
    *Respect the other person's values, needs, beliefs which may be very different from your own.

II. Listen until you can experience the other side.
    *In a conflict situation, feelings are strong and people may be more likely to misunderstand each other.
    *Speak for yourself only after you have restated the ideas and feelings of the person who has just spoken.
    *The goal is to listen so that you have heard and understood the other person's point of view.
    *Only when the other person feels heard do you have the right to speak.

III. All parties state the problem(s): use "I" statements.

IV. Let the other party talk, while you listen.
    *Don't interrupt.
    *Restate what you have heard.

V. Ask clarifying questions: "What if..."

VI. State your views, needs and feelings.
    *Briefly state your point of view.
    *Avoid loaded words--trigger words.
    *Disclose your feelings.

VII. Stay in the present and the future, not in the past.

VIII. Stick to the topic at hand.

IX. Look for areas of agreement.

X. State all requests for change in behavioral terms.

XI. Check your body language.
  *Make sure that your verbal and non-verbal expressions are consistent.
  *Rely more on words than facial expressions.
  *Show confidence.

◆◆ The following example will demonstrate the application of the problem solving process to a confilict in the workplace. The eight steps learned in the previous lesson are applied each with a special twist in conflict situations.

Teacher Note: In the step by step example, each of the eight problem solving steps are given in italics, while the adaptation of each step for conflict situations is printed in bold.

Situation: The Yap Manufacturing Company makes special order bolts. They have just bought a new piece of equipment--a grinder, which is needed to make two inch squared bolts. The grinder is portable and can be moved from place to place. Departments J and Y make this bolt as it is a popular style. On Monday Department Y wants to use the grinder at 10:30 for two hours and Department J has requested to use the grinder from 10:15 to 12:00 noon. How will you determine who is going to use the grinder?

I. *Identify and select the problem.*

Departments J and Y want to use the new portable grinder on Monday morning.

II. *Determine your goal.* **Define the problem in terms of needs, not solutions. What are the needs of each party?**

Departments J and Y need to deliver the product on schedule to their customers.

Department J Needs	Department Y Needs
Customer needs 2,000 bolts by Wednesday morning.	Customer needs 2,600 bolts by Wednesday at noon.
The bolts take six hours to make not including the time needed for packing and shipping.	The bolts take 8 1/2 hours to make not including the time needed for packing and shipping.
Grinding is the second step in the process and takes 1/3 of the total time.	Grinding is the third step in the process.
It takes 1 1/2 hours to complete the first procedure.	The first two procedures take 45 minutes each.

Grinding must be completed before the buffing and finishing processes can take place. Buffing and finishing take 2 1/2 hours to complete.	The bolts have to go through a 3-hour solution bath after they have been ground and then they are baked for 2 hours.
The customer is local.	The bolts have to be shipped out of town.
The bolts must be ready to be delivered by 5:15 PM Tuesday.	The order must be ready to be shipped by 5 PM Tuesday.
The shipping department needs to receive the order 2 hours before the order is loaded on the delivery truck.	The shipping department needs the bolts at least 3 hours before the scheduled shipping time.

III. *Evaluate your options.*

Brainstorm possibilities.

Start one process on Sunday
Rent another machine
Buy the bolts from a competitor and resell as Yap Company's
Tell one company its order will be delayed
Do nothing
Department Y start process on Friday
Have Department J work overtime Monday night.
Department J start its process later in the morning
Department J could use the grinder Monday afternoon
People could work on Saturday

Flesh out and evaluate the brainstorm list.

- Start one process on Sunday--starting on Sunday you would have to pay overtime. The cost of the product would go up.
- Rent another machine--that's a possibility, but again, the cost would go up.
- Buy the bolts from a competitor and resell as Yap Company's--that would be dishonest.
- Tell one company their order will be delayed--bad publicity.
- Do nothing.
- Department Y start process on Friday--possibly, but goes against company policy/practice.
- Have Department J work overtime Monday night--possibly, but the cost would rise.
- Department J start their process later in the morning--as long as it doesn't create too much back log.
- Department J could use the grinder Monday afternoon--especially if they start the process later.
- People could work on Saturday--it would increase the cost.

IV. Decide on a solution. **Select the solution that will best meet the needs of both parties, and check for possible consequences.**
The best solution may be to have Department J start the process later in the morning and plan to use the grinder in the afternoon, as long as this would not put them too far behind in their week's schedule.

V. Develop a plan of action. **Plan who will do what, where, and by when.**

Department Y will start their process first thing Monday morning. They will use the grinder from 10:30 to 12:30.

Department J will start their process at 10:00 Monday morning and they will use the grinder from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

VI. *Implement the plan.*

VII. *Evaluate the results.*

After the two departments have completed this modified schedule they will need to sit down and evaluate how the plan is working.

VIII. *Adjust the plan.*

If problems were identified, such as one department not finishing its work on schedule on Monday, the plan will need to be modified, keeping in mind the original goal.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Ask participants if anyone has a workplace related situation that she would be willing to share with the group. Work through this problem with the group applying the collaborative problem solving steps.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Apply the problem solving steps to Cleen Company's problem. Work in teams.

Note: Depending on the dynamics of the group, you may want to reverse the order of these two activities or select only one of them.

Handout: Problem Solving in Conflict Situations

I. *Identify and select the problem.*
  - A. Begin with an accurate statement of the problem.
  - B. A haphazard definition of the problem will probably undermine the entire process.

II. *Determine your goal.* **Define the problem in terms of needs, not solutions.**
  - A. What are the needs of each party?
    - 1. To discover needs, try to find out why the person wants the solution s/he initially proposed.
    - 2. How do you define the problem in terms of needs?
      - a. Distinguish between means and ends
        - 1) State your goal not the solution.
        - 2) The other person listens and tries to find the same information.
      - b. Be aware that the conflict of needs may be disguised as something else.
      - c. This method requires using the assertion process
        - 1) Give your assertion message.
        - 2) Listen reflectively until you understand the other's needs.
        - 3) State both sets of needs in a one-sentence summary.
    - 3. Once you understand the advantages that the solution has, you have discovered their need.
  - B. Solution-defined problems lead to a win/lose situation. Your goal is a win/win situation.

III. *Evaluate your options.*
  - A. Brainstorm possible solutions
  - B. Clarify all the ideas from the brainstorming.

IV. *Decide on a solution.* **Select the solution that will best meet the needs of both parties, and check for possible consequences.**
  - A. Ask the other person which alternative s/he would favor in the solution of the problem.
  - B. State which alternatives look best to you.
  - C. See what choices coincide.
  - D. Jointly decide on one or more possibilities.
  - E. Be sure the other person is satisfied with the solution.
  - F. Is it possible to come to a consensus?

V. - VIII.
See handout Implementing a Decision

◆◆ Introduce the handout: "**When you have made a decision in a conflict situation follow these steps to give your decision the best chance of working. These steps are also useful for implementing major individual or team decisions.**"

Implementing a Decision

I. Make an action plan to include:
  *What needs to be done?
  *Who could best help me make my decision work?
  *When does it need to be done?
  *In what order do things need to be done?--Set a timeline.

II. Use the SMART goals:
  *S--specific--What exactly are you going to do?
  *M--measureable--How will I know that I have achieved my goal?
  *A--achievable-- Can I do it?
  *R--realistic--How likely is it that I can do whatever I'm planning? What are my chances for success?
  *T--time bound--Have I set a date? Without a specific timeline/deadline, most plans remain dreams.

III. Evaluate the outcome. Check the decisions you make by asking the following questions:
  *Did the decision solve the problem? If you can't answer "yes," you need to go back to the beginning and look for another solution.
  *Do you feel good about the decision? If you don't feel good, you may not follow through.
  *Did the decision create other problems?
  *Can the decision be implemented? Are there resources to implement the decision?

IV. After the action plan has been put in place you need to determine:
  *When to evaluate.
  *Who will evaluate.
  *What the criterion will be.

Handout: Implementing a Decision

I. Make an action plan to include:
- *What needs to be done?
- *Who could best help me make my decision work?
- *When does it need to be done?
- *In what order do things need to be done?--Set a timeline.

II. Use the SMART goals:
- *S--specific--What exactly are you going to do?
- *M--measureable--How will I know that I have achieved my goal?
- *A--achievable-- Can I do it?
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- *Do you feel good about the decision? If you don't feel good, you may not follow through.
- *Did the decision create other problems?
- *Can the decision be implemented? Are there resources to implement the decision?

IV. After the action plan has been put in place you need to determine:
- *When to evaluate.
- *Who will evaluate.
- *What the criterion will be.

◆◆ Ask for a volunteer to share a workplace related conflict. Guide the group through applying the problem solving process to this situation.

◆◆ **[Handout]** Apply the problem solving steps to Cleen Company's problem. Work in teams.

Note: Depending on the dynamics of the group, you may want to reverse the order of these two activities or select only one of them.

Handout: Cleen Company's Problem

The Cleen Company has just purchased a new super-powered vacuum. The company has work teams which are assigned to different clients each day.

On Thursday, the green team has been assigned to clean the carpets in the National Bank lobby. This is a special assignment. The team cannot start its work until 7:00 PM and it must be finished by 8:45 PM.

On Thursday the orange team regularly cleans the offices of Jason & Associates. On this particular week Jason & Associates have requested that the carpet be steam cleaned in preparation for the company's annual open house. The orange team normally begins working at Jason & Associates at 6:30 PM and then moves on to The Clock Shop at 9:00 PM after it closes. It takes the orange team 2 hours to steam clean the carpet at Jason & Associates using the old steamer. If they use the new super-powered vacuum, they can finish the job in an hour and a half.

Both teams want to use the new super-powered vacuum at the same time. You have been called in to work with them to come up with a solution that satisfies both teams. What would you do? Be specific. You probably want to write down your solution.

Handout: Course Evaluation

Date: ______________________________

Course Title: ______________________________

Teacher: ______________________________

Location: ______________________________

Purpose: We would like to know what you think about the quality of your learning experience. Your honest and objective responses will help us to improve our instruction. Thank you.

Directions: Please mark the box that best represents your thinking about each item. Use the following scale.

	Low		Moderate		High
	1	2	3	4	5
The Instructor					
1. Demonstrated knowledge of the subject.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Presented the material clearly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Treated me with respect.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Created a learning environment that was non-threatening.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Participants					
1. Were encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Were encouraged to set goals for themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Were supportive of each other.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Myself					
1. I developed more confidence about my ability to learn.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I increased my ability to learn by myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I would recommend this course to a friend.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other

1. How have you used what you learned in this course on the job? at home? in the community?

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2. How can we improve this course for the next group of participants? Please share your ideas.

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